

Hafa Adai!

DFS donates 56 gifts, 2 Christmas trees to Kagman shelter. **PAGE 2**
Wildland fire was DFEMS' main challenge this year. **PAGE 7**

75¢

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OPERATION CHRISTMAS DROP

The crew of a Royal Australian Air Force C-130J Super Hercules navigates its way to the atoll of Kapingamarangi in the Federated States of Micronesia during Operation Christmas Drop last Dec. 13, 2018. Every December U.S. Air Force crews from Yokota Air Base, Japan team up with the Japan Air Self-Defense Force (Koku Jietai) and Royal Australian Air Force to air-drop supplies to the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, FSM, and the Republic of Palau.

U.S. AIR FORCE/SENIOR AIRMAN MATTHEW GILMORE

Arrivals rebound from Nov. drop

Arrivals to the CNMI fell to just 5,595 visitors in November this year due to Super Typhoon Yutu, which hit the islands in October. In comparison, the CNMI had 48,950 visitors in November last year.

Arrivals have steadily rebounded, however, as a majority of airlines have restored flights to the CNMI, soon after the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport resumed 24-hour operations on Nov. 20.

"In November 2018 the Marianas

saw the full impact of Super Typhoon Yutu, with almost all flights cancelled during the month," said Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Christopher A. Concepcion. "Fortunately, our recovery has been tremendous and faster than originally

expected. In December we are seeing most flights restored, and we are looking forward to a solid holiday travel period and full recovery over the next couple months."

Arrivals from South Korea

See ARRIVALS on Page 4

Red Cross aids over 4K families

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**
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REPORTER

The American Red Cross-NMI Chapter has provided financial assistance to over 4,000 families on

Saipan and Tinian who were severely impacted by Super Typhoon Yutu.

Last week, the ARC-NMI Chapter officially ended the interview process to determine those eligible for financial assistance. According to ARC-NMI Chapter executive director John Hirsh, financial assistance was given to 4,865 families across Saipan and Tinian.

Hirsh estimated that over \$2 million was used up.

"Some 4,865 families...got some level of financial assistance. ...I think we gave over \$2 million in financial

See RED CROSS on Page 4

Russian activists seek political asylum

By **JON PEREZ**
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REPORTER

Denis Uvarov and his wife Natalia Larina were just starting a family in 2016 in St. Petersburg—a port city on the Baltic Sea and the second largest after Moscow in northwestern

See RUSSIAN on Page 4

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Denis Uvarov, fourth from left, talks with some of the members of groups that oppose the policies of the administration of Russian President Vladimir Putin.



INSIDE



ASIA

North Koreans are marking the seventh anniversary of the death of leader Kim Jong Il.

PAGE 15



FOCUS

For Donald Trump, the political and the personal are all under examination.

PAGE 17



LIFE & STYLE

The Philippines' Catriona Gray was named Miss Universe 2018 in a competition in Bangkok.

PAGE 19



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Local

DFS donates 56 gifts, 2 Christmas trees to Kagman shelter



DFS Saipan president Marian Aldan-Pierce, together with other DFS officials and staff, turn over a donation of over 50 gifts and two Christmas trees yesterday to Community and Cultural Affairs Secretary Robert Hunter, seated left.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By **ERWIN ENCINARES**
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REPORTER

T Galleria of DFS Saipan donated over 50 gifts and two Christmas trees yesterday to families and children at the Kagman Emergency Shelter.

DFS president Marian Aldan-Pierce presented Community and Cultural Affairs Secretary Robert Hunter yesterday with 56 gifts and two Christmas trees complete with decorations after the DCCA secretary reportedly reached out to her last week.

"[Hunter] wondered if DFS would be kind enough to donate a Christmas tree, decorations, and toys and gifts. I immediately advised him that DFS is more than happy to help out," Aldan-Pierce told *Saipan Tribune*.

She noted that some of the staff of the luxury shopping center set out last week to buy age-specific gifts that were also wrapped, along with two Christmas trees, for the shelter.

"DFS Saipan is honored to be asked to be a part of this,"

Aldan-Pierce said. "In times like these, we have to open our hearts and wallets to help those who are unable to provide for themselves and every child should have a Merry Christmas and have a gift to open, regardless of [their] circumstance," she said.

With 39 families and 56 dependents under 18 years old who are currently staying at the shelter, DFS was able to ensure that all 56 underaged dependents will get a gift.

"We wanted to make sure that there was something

for the kids and families at the [Kagman shelter] for Christmas, but there was not a lot of time between their transfer from Public School System schools, the Saipan Aging Center, and the H.O.P.E. Center [in Marpi] and Christmas to make this happen," DCCA's Hunter told *Saipan Tribune*.

"This was incredibly generous of them and we did not expect to see one business cover gifts for all of the children. ... We were overwhelmed, and we are very thankful to DFS

Saipan Ltd. and Marian Pierce for making this happen," Hunter added, noting that his department sent letters to "a number of businesses" asking for help.

"Within minutes of receiving the letter, [Aldan-Pierce] responded, letting us know that they would be providing trees and gifts for all of the kids at the shelter," he said.

The Kagman Emergency Shelter Facility was turned into an emergency long-term

shelter for victims of Super Typhoon Yutu in late October. The repurposed former juvenile detention facility sustained little damage from Yutu, Hunter said in a previous interview, noting that the bunker-like architecture of the facility is ideal for withstanding future typhoons. He previously indicated that discussions to make the facility a permanent long-term shelter are in the pipeline.

'Cannabis Act may cast shadow on NMI's image as family destination'

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

The CNMI Cannabis Act of 2018 may cast a shadow on the CNMI's squeaky-clean image as a family destination, according to Marianas Visitors Authority board chair Marian Aldan-Pierce.

She pointed out that marijuana is still considered an illicit drug in many of the CNMI's source markets.

She said that MVA is still awaiting the promulgation of regulations of the Cannabis Act. "Meanwhile, as an agency, we do not anticipate undertaking any marketing strategies that may contradict or harm our image in those critical markets," she added.

Once regulations are promulgated, people will be allowed to use marijuana for medical and recreational use in the CNMI.

However, Aldan-Pierce said, since marijuana is still

illegal federally, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection has advised that any visitor who tells USCBP that they are entering the Marianas to use marijuana will be banned re-entry.

Aldan-Pierce said they don't have a position about the marijuana law because they have not really discussed the matter with the board.

"It's here but I don't think regulations have been done," said Aldan-Pierce, adding that until such time that they really know what the regulations are going to say, the board has not yet discussed it.

She said that Canada has legalized marijuana but the governments of Japan and China have cautioned their people about it.

Public Law 20-66, enacted into law by Gov. Ralph DLG Torres last Sept. 21, legalizes and controls marijuana use in the CNMI.

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WITH CELEBRITIES, SPORTS STARS SET TO VISIT

Over \$100M in advertising value for the CNMI

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

The CNMI expects to obtain over \$100 million in advertising value in 2019 from its top tourism market, South Korea, with the Marianas Visitors Authority inviting more Korean celebrities, sports stars, and even a leading fashion magazine for a pictorial here.

MVA Korea general manager Irene Lee said the Marianas Friendship Gold Tournament is happening this February and top Korean celebrities and sports stars have been invited to participate.

The event was originally scheduled for last November, but MVA rescheduled it for February because of Super Typhoon Yutu, said Lee in her presentation about the Korean market during MVA's general membership meeting at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan's Hibiscus Hall last Friday.

Lee said the event will promote the Marianas as a paradise for golfers through top-class golf resorts.

She said the tournament will also benefit the community as a fundraiser.

Attao: People's interests first

By **JON PEREZ**
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REPORTER

The lawmaker lined up to be the next speaker of the CNMI House of Representatives, Blas Jonathan T. Attao, hopes the relationship he has cultivated with the members of the House minority and the ruling GOP would result in legislation that would further improve the lives of people in the Commonwealth.

"I'm surrounded by experience and I know that the working relationship is there. ... We can push forward getting the need that our people deserve and hopefully get to the point in giving the people what they want," said Attao. "By working together, I know that we can take care of the needs but the goal is to get to the wants. And with the dynamics that we have here, the experience and knowledge around here is going to get to that point."

He added that people's interests should always come first. "To help our people first, that's the mentality that we're going to push through. To help our people, because the end result is not for the members of the Legislature."

"The end result is for the public and that is what we want. Are we going to face controversial legislations? Probably. We want to get to that point where we would be working together to help each other."

Making tough decisions

There will be a photo/video shoot with golfers who will sponsor a certain amount of donation for those in need, she said. Lee said the event's expected advertising value is over \$500,000.

In January, the company will invite the leading fashion magazine, *GRAZIA*.

She said they will secure a six-page pictorial set in the Marianas, advertising the sunglasses brand Supper Light with Korean celebrity Han Yeseul as the brand model.

She said images and video clips taken on Saipan will additionally be exposed on TV home-shopping programs and social channels.

Lee said the expected advertising value with Yeseul's photo shot is over \$3 million.

Lee said they also want to leverage the K-Pop wave and its powerful contents to maximize media exposure of the Marianas.

MVA Korea, she said, will invite this January an online-content production Vivo TV to shoot a web entertainment show with comedian entertainment group "Celeb Five."

Lee said there will be two

would always be part of their job. He promises transparency, though.

Next generation

He said that expanding the opportunities for the next generation would also be their priority. "We will always try to look at ways of improving the next generations' livelihood and giving them more opportunities."

"Our grandparents... gave us the opportunity to flourish individually and expand ourselves. ... With that, the goal is to get to the point [where we could] provide for those who would come after us. That's the goal."

Get elected first

He said the thought of being House speaker was brought up to him before the election. He didn't entertain it at first, since primarily, he needs to needs to get re-elected. "It was brought up to me multiple times before the election and I never considered it."

"Because, I am always thinking that you have to get through an election before you start making any moves. You cannot play chess if you are not even at the table to play."

The possibility dawned on him after he won his third term at the House. "After that, we looked at all the angles. On how I have gone through at the Legislature, as an employee at the Legislative Bureau and then a member."

episodes of 20 minutes each that will be uploaded to attract over 500,000 followers on YouTube, Naver TV Cast, V LIVE, Instagram, and Facebook.

She said the expected advertising value of the visit is over \$500,000.

As for the other islands, Lee said they will introduce the natural and hidden attractions of Tinian and Rota through a major TV program. She said they coordinated with SBS Entertainment Show, *The Law of the Jungle*, by inviting 12 celebrities to the Marianas.

A total of nine episodes,

each running 80 minutes, will be aired every Friday at 10pm from Dec. 21, 2018, to Feb. 22, 2019.

The result is over \$109 million in advertising value, said Lee.

She said Korea has traditionally been a very conservative, male-dominated society.

"But now we are seeing the growing influence of women's spending power in Korea. So, we have a new term called she-economy, which means women are the new drivers of the economy," she said.

The other trend, she said, is surging consumption of video. Lee said YouTube app use rate among Koreans tripled from 2016 to 2018.

"YouTube is emerging as the second largest social media channel for Koreans," said Lee, adding that MVA will be using the platform to communicate with Korean audiences.

There were 26 million outbound trips in South Korea in 2017; this year, they are expecting 28 million outbound trips.

"This is very pretty amazing number considering a small country with only 50 million population," Lee said.

She said 40 percent of Korean travelers are ages 30s to 40s—the biggest travel age group.

"And remember she-economy? Women take 50.1 percent. This is a new statistic because this is for the first time in Korean history that the share of

the female traveling is actually higher than men," Lee said.

As for Korean visitors to the Marianas, Lee said they have seen about 300,000 Korean visitors coming to the CNMI in fiscal year 2018. In 2017, there were over 300,000 Korean visitors to the CNMI. Lee blames the decrease on an airline company's suspension of flights.

"But despite the decrease, the airline load factor actually increased to 87 percent, which means that airlines are operating in a happy condition, that they are benefitting from this route," she said.

This also means that airlines will be considering putting in additional seats in the coming year.

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CUC eyes restoration of 24-hour water on Saipan

By BEA CABRERA
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CORRESPONDENT

Part of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s rebuilding efforts is to go back to the goal of providing 24-hour water supply throughout Saipan—a project that was strongly in progress until Super Typhoon Yutu hit the island and neighboring Tinian in late October.

CUC executive director Gary Camacho said that 24-hour water has been a big challenge for CUC for many years.

"We were able to achieve it for the first time in September but the storm has impacted that. So, the plan is to get us back to 24-hour water throughout the island soon enough as that is the focus and I think we will be able to achieve that without a problem."

"Water mitigation is a priority, along with geothermal, as we will be looking into that again. We are proceeding with understanding our

geothermal prospect even more," he added.



Camacho

Meanwhile, Camacho reiterated that water mitigation is extremely high on CUC's priority list. "In fact, it's on the top of the list... What this does is that the water supply will be available

in multiple places and locations that will be self-generating and not dependent on the overhead system. With this, water should be distrib-

uted accordingly for many areas that still doesn't have power," he said.

"Our water restoration program to distribute water across the island is in conjunction with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers to place generators. ...We do have a grant and a request for proposal is underway as we work diligently in getting the necessary information like waiting for final engineering designs to be complete because we want to

make sure that we get this thing moving," he added.

Expansion is also taking place. "As for power, we are going to be expanding with more guy wires, storm guys, and a variety of different things to secure the poles and system for future storms. Concrete poles are

in place, but now we need to anchor them down accordingly," he said.

"We were closing down on the Soudelor mitigation of concrete poles, but then Yutu hit... a lot of this will be dealt with and our system is much stronger as we move forward," said Camacho.

ARRIVALS

From Page 1

dropped 98 percent in November; there were only 531 visitors from Korea that month.

Jeju Air resumed its daily service from Incheon, Korea, on Nov. 27 and will restart night time services beginning Jan. 21, 2019. In time for holiday travel, Jeju Air flights departing from Busan will resume on Dec. 21, and Asiana Airlines will also reopen flights from Incheon on Dec. 20.

While arrivals from China dropped 85 percent in November to 2,400, the market was the first to restore all flights to the Marianas. Flights from Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, and Hangzhou have since resumed their normal schedule.

Arrivals from Japan were 97 percent lower in the month at 126 visitors, largely due to the cessation of direct flights from the country to the Marianas in May 2018. Skymark Airlines has officially announced scheduled daily direct flights from Japan in 2019. In the interim, the MVA is promoting

two-city packages to the Marianas via Seoul, Korea, and has launched new promotions with Expedia.

Economic highlights

South Korea's economy is expected to grow 2.6 percent in 2019 due to slowing exports and weak domestic demand. The Korea Institute for Industrial Economics & Trade also lowered this year's gross domestic product outlook to 2.7 percent. The average U.S. dollar/won exchange rate in November was 1124.85 won, a slight decrease from the previous rate of 1129.53 won in October.

According to the latest data from China Outbound Tourism Research Institute, 43 million Chinese citizens have travelled out of the country in the third quarter of 2018, and the number is still growing.

Japan's consumer price inflation rose to 1.4 percent year-on-year in October 2018 from 1.2 percent in the previous month and matching market estimates. It was the highest rate since February, mainly due to a jump in prices of food. (MVA)

RUSSIAN

From Page 1

Russia—when matters took a turn for the complicated—and frightening—when Uvarov became involved in a group that opposes President Vladimir Putin.

Fearing for their lives, he and his wife left St. Petersburg and randomly chose to go to the CNMI since Russian nationals enjoy parole authority and are allowed to stay in the Commonwealth for 45 days. They arrived on Saipan on Nov. 29, 2017.

That mean they are now both overstaying tourists. They sought the help of a local immigration lawyer in a bid to obtain asylum for political reasons. However, they were dismayed to discover that people in the CNMI are not eligible to apply for asylum.

"This includes people brought to the CNMI after being intercepted in international or U.S. waters... In most cases, [granting of status] individuals in the U.S. without a nonimmigrant status need to leave the country in order to obtain nonimmigrant classification," according to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website.

The bar on the eligibility to apply for asylum will be lifted on Jan. 1, 2020, while granting of legal status in the CNMI can also have exceptions for individuals in the Commonwealth that hold parole authorization. Their case is now with the Executive Office for Immigration Review, which is under the U.S. Department of Justice that's responsible for all immigration cases.

"We don't have any visa for any country. We found out that we don't need any visa to go to the CNMI. They can't just send us back to Russia. ...From what I understand, the only way they can send us back is if I steal or attack somebody. Maybe,

they could send us to another safe country," said Uverov.

"We already talked to an immigration lawyer and he helped us bring our situation to [USCIS]. We went to [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] and gave our documents. We gave them statements and our papers were sent to California, then they will decide what to do with our situation. We're waiting for the court's decision and they say the process could take years."

Opposing Putin

Uvarov has a degree in geography from St. Petersburg State University and worked as a fitness coach. What got him in trouble with Putin, he said, was his work as a journalist and political activism, with stories critical of Putin's rise to power and 19-year reign.

He claims that those who criticize Putin's administration experience persecution.

"Russia has problems about press freedom and human rights," Uvarov told *Saipan Tribune*. "[Putin] persecutes his opponents ... He invaded Ukraine and captured the Crimean peninsula. Now, there's war between Ukraine and Russia. He has also been aggressively supporting the Ukraine separatists. I'm a Russian citizen but I don't support Russia invading another country."

Larina, who was working in St. Petersburg as an accountant after earning a degree at the Moscow State University School of Economics, said: "Our president is the big problem. A lot of people from Russia oppose him but are afraid for their lives."

Uverov said that Russia's annexation of Crimea has already claimed the lives of 10,000 people since 2014. "Before, corruption was the biggest problem. Right now, Putin thinks Russia is his own property. If he wants, he can just take anything. Russia is now dangerous for

those who oppose Putin."

"You will have little problem if you, let's say, protest about [Joseph] Stalin. But if you organize protest actions you will have a lot of problems. If you protest the war on Ukraine, that would also be a problem for you," said Uverov, who met his wife Larina in a fitness center in St. Petersburg.

Complete control

Uverov said that Putin keeps an iron grip on Russia. "We continue to communicate with opposition people in and outside of Russia. Things are also not that simple in Russia. There's a fake opposition that is also controlled by the government. They appear as opposition on television or the newspapers but they are fake."

"Sometimes, there are international journalists but it's very rare. A famous media [outfit] like CNN usually do reports on famous opposition leaders, for example [Russian lawyer and political activist] Alexei Navalny. Russia doesn't have an independent media, even those who seem to criticize the President, are also [government] controlled."

He has also learned of several arrests made by the Putin administration. "I read about one guy who fled Ukraine but he went to Russia to visit his mother and was thrown into prison. One member of our group, about two or three weeks ago, also got arrested."

He said they've met some of their fellow Russian nationals on the island. "We met one Russian who is in a similar situation like us. He is also critical of Putin. But, sometimes it is hard to talk to other Russians here since they could be supporters of Putin. So, our first question if we met a fellow Russian should be 'what do you think of the President?' It is hard to trust them."

Current situation

Right now, their situation has

taken a turn for the worse. The small apartment where they have been living in was blown away by Super Typhoon Yutu last October. Since then, they have been living in various shelters such as San Vicente Elementary School and Tanapag Elementary School. Right now, they are at the former Juvenile Detention Center in Kagman.

"We have come to the shelter, which was open after the typhoon because we have no other place to stay. We were told that the shelter will be closed soon since people have rebuilt their homes or have been living in tents. We have nothing to restore and we don't have an area for a tent," said Uverov.

"We have a small savings and have been living modestly for almost a year but we're facing a big problem. There were a lot of kind people who've been helping us and one of them gave us bicycles that we use to go around the island. We do not have any jobs that would help us pay for rent since we don't have any work permit. We suffered in Russia and now we're also suffering here."

Larina said they were living comfortably in Russia but they needed to leave their country to keep themselves safe. "We're not poor people in Russia and we earned university degrees. But we have to leave because of our safety. We just packed our things and left behind our lives there, and entered [the CNMI] as tourists. What would the future bring us?"

"We're living in a shelter and use bikes to go around. [Non-governmental groups] give us food at the shelter and we also got food stamps on the disaster program. We cannot do anything; we cannot drive a car or work because they cannot give us permit to work since we're already here illegally. We want to have opportunities in life, like work and have a family. How can we do it?"

RED CROSS

From Page 1

assistance and we gave out hundreds of thousands worth of relief items," he said.

The amount of financial assistance the chapter gave out depended on the amount of damage sustained by each house and the number of people in the household.

"The people eligible for our financial program were the people whose homes were the most damaged... we helped close to 5,000 families, but there could be 15,000 families...who were impacted at some level. Everybody was affected...could be a power outage, or they lost all their food as a result of the storm," he said.

With the completion of the Red Cross' role in emergency assistance, it has now shifted into helping partner agencies that are focused on long-term recovery.

"We're done. But we are working closely with all our partners in the community,

whether it be Karidat [Social Services], Salvation Army, the Governor's Office, or the [Temporary Emergency Tent and Roofing Installation Support] program. ...Our next step is really to try and help support organizations involved in the longer-term recovery work, those who help people rebuild their homes," said Hirsh.

The chapter is referring people who need additional help to partner agencies.

"We're still referring people to the other agencies...all the different programs that are out there and helping. We are acting as a clearinghouse for information," he added.

Hirsh said the chapter is an emergency program meant to serve the community for the first few weeks following a major disaster.

"It's really only for those first few weeks after a disaster where we provide emergency relief. The longer-term recovery work is possible from [the Federal Emergency Management Agency] and other organizations in the community," he said.

Skymark Airlines and the Lady Diann Torres Foundation serve lunch to Kagman Emergency Shelter Facility shelterees yesterday. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Skymark, foundation donate meals to Kagman shelter

By **ERWIN ENCINARES**
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REPORTER

A Japanese airline collaborated with a non-government organization yesterday to donate lunch and refreshments to shelterees at the Kagman Emergency Shelter Facility.

Community and Cultural Affairs Secretary Robert Hunter told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that Skymark Airlines Inc. and the Lady Diann Torres Foundation donated 150 meals for all of the shelterees at the permanent long-term shelter in Kagman.

"Skymark and the Lady Diann Foundation contacted us about the possibility of providing the meal and desserts," Hunter said.

The meal included rice, a side dish, cake, and even ice keki for the children.

"We are really grateful that they went out of their way without any request from us," Hunter said.

According to Hunter, both Skymark and the LDTF approached DCCA to donate the lunch meals for the shelterees.

"...They contacted us and asked if they could provide a meal for the shelterees," he said. "We did not send a request to them—they did [the donation] on their own."

KESF shelter manager Lucinda Selepeo also expressed the same gratitude toward both Skymark and the LDTF, Hunter said.

There are currently 39 families at the shelter.

High court affirms man's sexual abuse conviction and sentence

The Supreme Court issued its opinion in *Commonwealth v. Hank Taitano* yesterday, affirming the trial court's judgment and sentence against Taitano, who was found guilty of sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree. He was sentenced to 30 years in prison—the maximum—without the possibility of parole.

It was established during trial that Taitano had sex with the 12-year-old minor in July 2014. Months later, the victim discovered she was pregnant and told a police officer that Taitano had sexually abused her. After a three-day jury trial, Taitano was found guilty.

In his appeal, Taitano claimed deficiencies during and after trial, including: (1) an incomplete *Daubert* hearing; (2) prosecutorial misconduct during the Commonwealth's closing remarks; (3) cumulative errors resulting in an unfair trial; (4) ineffective assistance of counsel for failure to object to prosecutorial misconduct; and (5) a sentence that was not properly individualized.

The Supreme Court further defined the parameters of expert testimony as outlined in *Commonwealth v. Crisostomo* issued earlier this year. In particular, the high court noted that determinations of reliability are assessed under the liberal standards set forth in the U.S. Supreme Court opinion of *Daubert v. Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals*. The CNMI Supreme Court noted that challenges to the expert's conclusion go to the weight of the testimony, to be assessed by the jury, rather

than to the admissibility of the testimony, decided by the trial judge. The high court ultimately concluded the trial court's *Daubert* hearing was an abuse of discretion, and its exclusion of the expert's testimony based on a finding of unreliability was also an abuse of discretion. Despite these findings, the Supreme Court found harmless error.

The Supreme Court also found that the Commonwealth did not improperly "vouch" for the victim. In other words, the court did not find the Commonwealth endorsed or expressed a personal belief about the victim's testimony. As a result, counsel was not ineffective for failing to object, and the errors, viewed cumulatively, did not require a new trial.

Finally, the high court also affirmed the 30-year sentence imposed on Taitano. It reasoned that viewing the permissible aggravating and mitigating factors together, a reasonable person could render the same sentence.

The Supreme Court's full opinion is available at www.cnmilaw.org. (PR)

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More review needed for Rev&Tax department bill

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The bill that aims to create a Department of Revenue and Taxation needs further review, according to the House of Representatives lawyer, since the CNMI Constitution limits the number of departments in the CNMI government.

Senate Bill 20-01 aims to turn the Division of Revenue and Taxation, which is under the Department of Finance, into a separate department.

Kagman PTSA meeting set

The Kagman cluster of schools will be having a PTSA meeting on Dec. 18, 2018, at 5:30pm in the Kagman Elementary School cafeteria. All parents and

House legal counsel John Cool, in last week’s House Judicial and Governmental Operations committee hearing, advised members that creating another department is not possible since it would exceed the number stated in the CNMI Constitution.

There are currently 10 departments that hold Cabinet secretary status under the Governor’s Office. Aside from Fi-

guardians are encouraged to attend this meeting. Call the school at 237-3921, 664-4100, or 664-3911 if you have any questions or concerns. (PR)

nance, the other departments are Commerce, Community and Cultural Affairs, Labor, Lands and Natural Resources, Public Lands, Public Works, Public Safety, Corrections, and Fire and Emergency Management Services.

In a letter to JGO chair Ivan A. Blanco (R-Saipan), Rota Mayor Efraim M. Atalig supports the creation of the department. “With a Department of Revenue and Taxation, revenue collection will be the focus of this department. Under the present structure, the Department of Finance secretary is too preoccupied with other mundane tasks to focus on revenue collection.”

“As pointed in the findings



Blanco

and purpose of the bill, I wish to reiterate that the salary and of the [Revenue and Taxation secretary] would be exempted from the statute governing the salaries of department secretaries. Perhaps this provision would be included in the bill. With an attractive salary, perhaps a professional tax enforcer from off-island can be recruited. We need to pay attention to this function in government in order to maximize

revenue collection.”
S.B. 20-01 would lessen the Finance secretary’s workload, especially now that the CNMI has multiple resources of revenue.

Finance Secretary Larrisa Larson is the current head of the department. Aside from Revenue and Taxation, the other divisions under Finance are Customs and Procurement and Supply.

If S.B. 20-01 becomes a law

establishing the new department, Revenue and Taxation would become a Cabinet-level department also headed by a secretary under the CNMI’s Executive Branch. Its main responsibility would be overseeing revenue collection and enforcing CNMI tax laws.

The new department would facilitate the collection of income, sales receipts, gaming provisions, and other taxes. It would be composed of two divisions: Tax Services and Tax Enforcement.

Youth holiday fair to head to Kobler, Chalan Kanoa

By ERWIN ENCINARES
erwin_encinares@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The three-day 2018 Youth Holiday Fair over the weekend is headed toward Koblerville and Chalan Kanoa after its first celebration in Kagman.

Shelane Borja, the Office of the Governor’s special assistant for youth affairs, told *Saipan Tribune* Saturday evening that the fair would continue at the Chalan Kanoa Community Center on Thursday, Dec. 20, 2018, and at the Koblerville Community Center on Saturday, Dec. 22, 2018, from 6pm to 9pm on both days.

“We want to...make [the fair accessible to] those without transportation and those having a hard time going to [other sites],” she said.

Borja noted that the fair started off at Kagman to get in touch with the nearby shelterees at the Kagman Emergency Shelter, which is the former juvenile detention center that was repurposed into an emergency long-term shelter after Super Typhoon Yutu devastated most of the southern area of Saipan.

“We wanted a way to meet the people in the north, especially in Kagman, for those in the shelters,” she said, adding that the fair is open to the public.

The packed Kagman Community Center Saturday evening is a bar that Borja would like to raise in Chalan Kanoa and Koblerville.

“Thank you to the community for coming out and avail-

ing of this event, as well as being here to spend time with their families, friends, and everyone,” she said. “[We want] to bring the Christmas and holiday spirits to families and the community as a whole, especially to the youth.”

Borja said her office worked with the Public School System to get some shelterees to the event.

The fair featured booths of government and non-government agencies, such as the Division of Youth Affairs, Community Guidance Center, the Garrett Lee Smith program, Saipan Young Professionals, Marianas Young Professionals, Commonwealth Office on Transit Authority, and the Lady Diann Torres Foundation, to name a few.



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 19-013

Opening Date: Friday, December 7, 2018
Closing Date: Until filled

Drinking Water and Wastewater Division Manager (“DM”)

The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (“CUC”) is seeking a qualified Drinking Water and Wastewater Division Manager (“DM”). CUC is a public utility corporation, operating on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (“CNMI”)—a United States territory in the northwestern Pacific Ocean.

The CNMI is a tropical paradise of fourteen islands. In the CNMI you can escape to a place of magnificent beaches and crystal clear aqua waters, and rich history. Saipan offers year-round outdoor activities, world class diving and golfing, international shopping, a range of ethnic restaurants and a cacophony of indigenous and international cultures.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND OPPORTUNITY OFFERED:

Reporting directly to CUC’s Deputy Executive Director or designee, the “DM” fills a position required by the Stipulated Order (“SO”) of the United States of America vs. the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands, Civil Case No. CV 08-0051.

- The incumbent of this position is under the direct supervision of the Deputy Executive Director (which may also be known as the Deputy Director for Water and Wastewater)
- Manages and oversees the CUC Drinking Water and Wastewater Division.
- Supervises employees in direct charge of drinking water systems’ production, treatment, and distribution, and wastewater collection and treatment plants utilizing activated sludge secondary treatment processes.
- Responsible for the effective and efficient utilization of equipment, materials, and personnel to complete water and wastewater maintenance programs in a timely and cost effective manner.
- Manages, leads, motivates, and develops staff towards attaining needed training, skills, and certifications.
- Plays significant role in the management of drinking water and wastewater systems during periods of planning, design, and construction; user fee system development.
- Prepares and maintains various records and reports for the division, including: purchase orders and invoices, monthly status reports, maintenance records, budget status, etc.
- Other duties as required or assigned.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

- An equivalent to a four year college degree or other field related to work with large-scale utilities and may substitute for one year of the required experience;
- Five years of proven, specialized experience as a manager in direct charge of drinking water systems’ production, treatment, and distribution, and wastewater collection and treatment plants utilizing activated sludge secondary treatment processes.
- Skills: Proven manager with communication skills dealing with the public, operations staff and senior management; Demonstrated ability to lead, motivate, and develop staff.
- Experience: Experience with managing drinking water and wastewater systems during periods of planning, design, and construction; Experience with drinking water and wastewater systems; user fee system development; staff training and development; and federal drinking water and wastewater requirements.
- Knowledge: Thorough knowledge of the operating principles and maintenance requirements of at least three (3) million gallons per day (“mgd”) of an activated sludge wastewater treatment plant including primary and secondary treatment processes, oxygen production, and sludge digestion and dewatering.
- Preferred Requirements:
 - Bachelor’s degree in Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Science, Civil Engineering, Public Administration, or a degree related to the position.
 - Current (unexpired) level 3 certifications from a U.S. state, U.S. territory, U.S. commonwealth, or the District of Columbia in water treatment, and water distribution.
 - Current (unexpired) level 2 certifications from a U.S. state, U.S. territory, U.S. commonwealth, or the District of Columbia in wastewater treatment, and wastewater distribution.

LOCATION: SAIPAN, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.

SALARY INFORMATION:

Based on specialized experience as a water and wastewater utility manager in a U.S. state, U.S. territory, U.S. commonwealth, and/or the District of Columbia. Base salary starts at \$100,000. Also, based on educational achievement and specific (unexpired) certifications stated in this ad as preferred requirements.

POSITION: One (1).

CONTRACT: Two-year; subject to renewal.

RELOCATION EXPENSES:

If hired from outside the CNMI, relocation expenses are negotiable; but they are not to exceed \$5,000.00 for moving to Saipan and not to exceed \$5,000.00 for moving away from Saipan. Receipts will be required for justification. Other conditions may be applicable.

SUBMISSION PROCESS:

To apply, please submit a resume, cover letter, a list of references, and a CUC Employment Application by one of the following means:

1. United States Postal Service, First Class Mail or Priority Mail*: Human Resource Office
Commonwealth Utilities Corporation P.O. Box 501220
Saipan, MP 96950-1220 USA

*If you choose to submit via USPS, please still also fax “or” email “or” drop off your package.


2. Fax: 670-235-5131
3. Email: employment.applications@cucgov.org
4. Drop Off:
Drop off your package at the CUC Human Resource Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan. Otherwise, you may drop it off at the CUC Tinian or Rota Administration Office.

POLICIES:

The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation is an equal opportunity provider and employer and will not discriminate or tolerate discrimination against any employee or applicant in any manner prohibited by law.

It is also the policy of CUC to achieve a drug-free workplace and persons selected for employment will be required to pass a drug test which screens for illegal drug use prior to final appointment.

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COMMONWEALTH JUDICIARY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Guma* Hustisia / Iimwal Aweewe / House of Justice
P.O. Box 502165 • Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone (670) 236-9700/9800 • Facsimile: (670) 236-9702
Website: www.justice.gov.mp

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Judiciary is seeking a highly motivated individual for the position of:

ACCOUNTANT I

Announcement # JVA19-005

DUTIES: The successful candidate will work under the general supervision of the Presiding Judge and direct supervision of the Director of Courts or his/her designee on Saipan which involves work in the maintenance and examination of accounting records and procedures and in the preparation of analysis of financial reports. The duties of this position include, but are not limited to the following:

- Maintain various ledgers, registers, journals and other records required in fiscal operations;
- Furnishes budgetary data to higher-level accountants for budget analysis;
- Prepares financial statements and reports for review by supervisor and operating personnel;
- Maintains records necessary for the determination and reporting of federal expenditures and fund balances;
- Takes trial balances and makes adjusting and closing entries;
- Verifies and analyses financial data and prepares financial statements and reports;
- Participates in the collection, compilation, classifications and evaluation of fiscal data;
- Maintains budgetary accounts and financial records for an office;
- Maintains control accounts so that the status of funds may be determined;
- Post entries to these accounts from supporting documents;
- Post and balances journals and ledgers and reconciles accounts;
- Coordinates work of the clerical staff in an office;
- Assists in preparing budget estimates by gathering pertinent information from various book of accounts;
- Assigns and reviews the work of others for accuracy and completeness;
- Explains departmental procedures to other employees and the public; and
- Performs other related duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS: Candidate must have a high school diploma or equivalent and should have a combination equivalent to graduation from college or university with a BA major in accounting or related field, a minimum of two (2) years experience in accounting work. Successful candidate must provide current police and traffic clearances and proof of eligibility to work in the CNMI. Applicants given a conditional offer of employment with the CNMI Judiciary will be required to submit to urinalysis to screen for the illegal use of drugs prior to employment.

COMPENSATION AND TENURE: This position is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Presiding Judge. The salary range will be \$20,000.00 - \$21,000.00 annually.

INTERESTED PERSONS may obtain application form at the Marianas Business Plaza, Suite 212 on the second floor or Window #3 at the front of the Guma Hustisia/Iimwal Aweewe/House of Justice in Susupe, or at the Superior Court offices on Kotten Tinian and Centron Hustisia in Rota. Completed applications, cover letter, and three references should be submitted to:

Human Resources
Guma Hustisia/Iimwal Aweewe/House of Justice
P.O. Box 502165
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. (670)236-9818
Fax. (670) 236-9702
hr.judiciary@justice.gov.mp

This job announcement will remain open until filled and can be seen and a printable copy of the application downloaded at <http://www.justice.gov.mp>.

THE CNMI JUDICIARY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER.

Wildland fire was DFEMS' main challenge this year

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The main challenge the CNMI Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services faced this year were wildland fires.

Commissioner Clyde Norita of the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services highlighted this during an interview at the Western Pacific Fire Chiefs Conference last Wednesday at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.

"We've been pretty lucky; I will tell you that our only concern this year was the wildland fire," he said.

"Lucky" because the CNMI wildland fire season does not coincide with the international wildland fire season.

"Our fire season for wildland fire is different from the international wildland fire. We start in March and end in around June and the international wildland fire starts in June and ends in about

November. ...Our wildland fire team is trained by the U.S. Forest Service so we are trained to handle fires like that," said Norita.

A handful of CNMI's firefighters are deployed to the U.S. mainland each year to help combat wildland fire.

Following Yutu, Norita said that the CNMI faced a couple of wildland fires as a result of the mass amount of green debris still littering the island.

According to Norita, one

of the most recent was the brush fire in As Gonno just a week ago. Norita said the fire was at a green debris dumping area and no homes or individuals were injured or were in danger during the incident.

"It was just green debris. To us, and the company commander who was at the scene, there was no reason to fight this fire. It's isolated, it's not near any neighborhood, and it's

green debris so we just let it burn and his decision was right...we shouldn't have to waste water, especially if water is tight," he said.

Another recent fire-related incident in the CNMI was when the abandoned Pretty Market building in Garapan went up in flames over a month ago.

A number of homes were damaged as a result of the fire and, according to Norita, the cause of the fire has yet to be

determined.

"Our investigative team is still working on it but we've got witnesses and we've already interviewed them. I want to leave it at that. ... When Pretty Market burned, the challenge was that the hydrants were not working; there was no water because there was no power to pump the water out.What we had in place that day was...four tanker trucks filled with water," he said.

Lone Sailor statue unveiled in Guam

ASAN, Guam—Standing at 7 ft. tall and gazing toward the Pacific Ocean, the Lone Sailor statue was unveiled during a ceremony at the Ricardo J. Bordallo Governor's Complex in Hagatna, Guam last Dec. 15.

The effort to place a statue on island was an initiative of the Vietnamese-American community and the U.S. Navy Memorial to demonstrate the special relationship between the Navy, the sea services, Guam and thousands of Vietnamese citizens who found refuge in Guam in the closing days of the Vietnam War during Operation New Life.

"This is where they came through, 111,000 of them," said retired Rear Adm. Frank Thorp, president and CEO of the U.S. Navy Memorial. "The Lone Sailor will stand proudly and will represent for...every man and woman who has served in the Navy, who serves in the Navy today or who will serve in the future."

Guam's Lone Sailor is the western-most in the nation and is the 16th installed.

"This Lone Sailor will stand the watch at Adelup," said Rear Adm. Shoshana Chatfield, commander, Joint Region Marianas. "[It] looks out to that very important point where the Pacific Ocean

meets the Philippine Sea, where great battles were generated, and great victories won on behalf of freedom; and the free and open Indo-Pacific that we cherish has its defense here [in] Guam."

As one of many memorials at the governor's complex, the Lone Sailor stands alongside the Guam Seal and is surrounded by 19 benches that represent each village in Guam.

Guam Lt. Gov. Ray Tenorio expressed his appreciation to the Navy Memorial and the Navy for their partnership and touched upon the military's important relationship to the people of Guam.

"They're going to look at that Lone Sailor and they're going to be proud of what they see here," he said. "Every person has served in the military one way or another [and] has had the benefit of the United States Navy." (PR)



Leadership from Joint Region Marianas and U.S. Naval Base Guam, the government of Guam and the U.S. Navy Memorial gather for a photo after an unveiling ceremony for the Lone Sailor statue in Hagatna, Guam last Dec. 15.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

FHB resumes normal hours

Effective yesterday, Dec. 17, all First Hawaiian Bank branches on Saipan have resumed normal banking hours.

■ Monday – Thursday: 9am to 4pm

■ Friday: 9am to 6pm

■ Saturday – Sunday: Closed

FHB customers with internet connectivity may access their account information online via FHB Online and Mobile or may contact the bank's Customer Service Call Center for at 1-888-844-4444.

FHB's Saipan branches are in Gualo Rai at the Gualo Rai Commercial Center on Middle Road and in Oleai at the Oleai Center on Beach Road. (PR)

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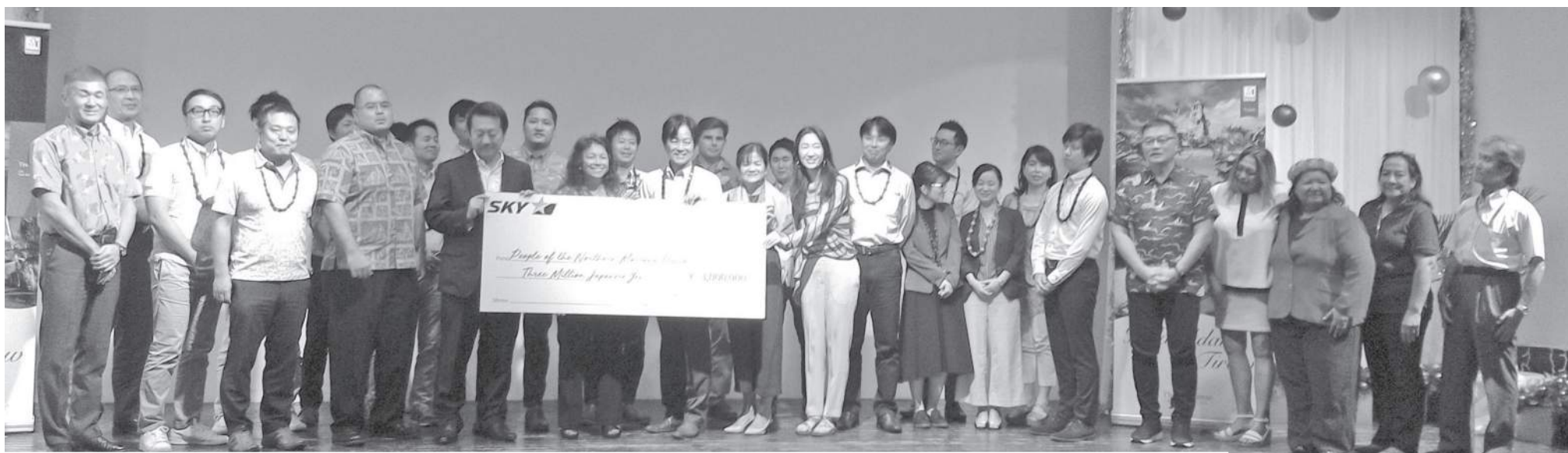
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SKYMARK DONATION

Marianas Visitors Authority board chair Marian Aldan-Pierce receives the 3 million Japanese yen or about \$30,000 that Skymark Airlines Inc. donated to MVA for the CNMI's recovery efforts during MVA's general membership meeting at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan's Hibiscus Hall last Friday. To Aldan-Pierce's right is Skymark executive officer Narutoshi Terada. Also in the photos are MVA board members, officials, and staff, and Rep. Edmund Villagomez. The donation will be given to Karidat Social Services.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE



ACCESS DONATION

Marianas Visitors Authority board chair Marian Aldan-Pierce, MVA board members, officials and staff, along with Rep. Edmund Villagomez, receive the 1 million yen or about \$10,000 that MVA's representative office in Japan, Access, donated to MVA for the CNMI's recovery efforts from Super Typhoon Yutu's massive destruction. The donation will be given to Karidat Social Services.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Bookings jump with Marianas publicity push in South Korea

A unified push by the Marianas Visitors Authority and its tourism partners to rebuild the Korean market after Super Typhoon Yutu is paying off, with an uptick in bookings in early December.

Since the resumption of normal operations at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport on Nov. 27, 2018, Jeju Air has resumed its daily service from Incheon, with flights from Busan to resume on Dec. 21 and Asiana Airlines to also resume flights from Seoul on Dec. 20.

The MVA launched its "We Together" recovery campaign in the first week of December to help fill airline seats to Saipan via various promotions and sales. Reservations for December and March 2018 almost doubled in a week, while bookings in January and February also saw steady increase.

"The MVA and its tourism partners are pulling out all the stops to show the traveling public in Korea that the Marianas is again a beautiful and safe destination worth visiting," said MVA acting mar-

keting manager Thomas Kim. "New tour products are being sold, discounted flights and packages are being offered, and media [familiarization] tours are being scheduled. The 'We Together' promotion is being carried on various platforms, from home shopping channels, to social commerce, to travel agent and airline websites, newspapers, key opinion leaders and more. We are very pleased with the results of our first week of the promotion and will continue to push hard to restore the strength of the Korean market through the assurance that the Marianas is back in business and still an incredible place to visit."

More than half of major travel agencies offering Marianas tour products posted triple digit growth in the number of bookings for December made in the first week of the month, showing a strong demand for holiday travel bolstered by the "We Together" special offers from travel agencies and airlines.

In cooperation with Brand USA, the MVA is arranging

for *Lonely Planet* to visit Rota and Saipan on Dec. 26-30, 2018. Editors of *Maeil Business Newspaper* will have a familiarization tour of Saipan on Dec. 13-16, 2018, and *Aju Business Daily* will send an editorial team to cover scuba-diving on Rota and Saipan at the end of the month. In partnership with Korea's No. 1 travel community platform Travelholic, two film crews will visit the Marianas this month, including one of the top content creators in Korea, Seongin Park, who has 80,000 followers.

"Based on news stories we have monitored, coverage of the Marianas has focused nearly exclusively on the normalization of tourism, which is great," said MVA managing director Christopher Conception. "This underscores our promotional message. The market has turned around, and we want to see more Korea visitors more quickly. That's our goal."

Last fiscal year, Korea was the top source market of visitors for the Marianas. (MVA)



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

CUC-RFP-18-032



Supply, Installation and Commissioning of a 1.5 MW Trailer Mounted Diesel Generating Set with Enclosure for the CUC Power Plant No. 3, Saipan, CNMI

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified firms for the Supply, Installation and Commissioning of a 1.5 Mega Watt Trailer Mounted Diesel Generating Set with Enclosure for the CUC Power Plant No. 3 Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 (non-refundable) for one RFP package set. The RFP package consisting of the specifications and plans for the project, will be provided in a CD or emailed to the registered email ID. Prospective Proposers must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division.

One (1) original and four (4) hard copies, along with an electronic copy of the proposal on a compact disk in PDF format or USB Drive, must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-RFP-18-032, Supply, Installation and Commissioning of a 1.5 MW Trailer Mounted Diesel Generating Set with Enclosure for the CUC Power Plant No. 3, Saipan, CNMI" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than January 3, 2019 at 10:00 AM (ChST). Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

A Proposal Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total proposal price must accompany the proposals. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or proposal bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful Proposer. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety.

Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Proposers are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. Offerors shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity to discussion and revision of proposals, and such revision may be permitted after submission and prior to award for the purpose of obtaining the best and final offers. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing offerors. All Offeror are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Offeror due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Offeror are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All responses to this RFP should take into account any and all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the obligation of the proponent awarded a contract. Successful proponents will be required to submit a copy of a valid CNMI Business license in compliance with the Contractor's Registration and Licensing Laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, upon award of the contract. The Contractor and all subcontractors will be obligated to pay wage rates not less than the current CNMI minimum wage, prevailing through the period of contract, as indicated in the web page: <https://marianaslabor.net/>. The proponents shall be required to comply with all applicable CNMI and Federal Laws.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on December 14, 2018 to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to yvonne.cabrera@cucgov.org, CUC-Power Generation Manager, Richard Cano via email address richard.cano@cucgov.org and Christie Sablan, CUC Purchasing Assistant via email address christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY CAMACHO
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Atalig, girlfriend, US govt agree to delay trial

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Rota Mayor Efraim M. Atalig and his girlfriend, Evelyn Atalig, have agreed with the U.S. government to postpone the jury trial in their case to March 12, 2019, instead of the current schedule of Jan. 15, 2019.

The Ataligs and the U.S. government, through their lawyers, said a superseding

indictment was issued against both Efraim and Evelyn Atalig last Nov. 28.

That superseding indictment named Evelyn Atalig as a defendant for the first time and also brought new charges against Efraim Atalig.

Evelyn Atalig entered her initial appearance in the case only last week, Monday.

David George Banes and Steven P. Pixley, counsel for Efraim and Evelyn Atalig re-

spectively, and assistant U.S. attorney Eric O'Malley, coun-

sel for the U.S. government, said their request for a continuance of the trial "is grounded upon substantial justice."

The Ataligs waived their right to a speedy trial.

The parties said the ends of justice would be served by continu-

ing the jury trial date.

"The reasons for such continuance outweigh the best interest of the public and the defendant in a speedy trial," according to the parties' stipulation signed by Banes, Pixley, and O'Malley last Friday.

The Ataligs had already



Atalig

pleaded not-guilty to the superseding indictment that charged the two of them for making CNMI government-funded trips to California, Palau, Guam, and Saipan using false pretenses.

The Atalig are facing four charges—conspiracy, wire fraud, theft from program receiving federal funds, and one count of false statements. They are out of jail, subject to some conditions.

The original indictment was filed last Aug. 30. It charged Mayor Atalig with only one count of wire fraud over the Guam political rally.

The mayor is facing another case that the Office of the Attorney General filed last Aug. 31, before the Superior Court arising from the same political rally in Guam. In this case, he and seven other Rota municipal officials are being charged with theft and misconduct in public office.

Atalig was re-elected Rota mayor last Nov. 13.

SIS students congratulate newly-naturalized teacher

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A big surprise was waiting for Saipan International School teacher Mili Saiki when she left the Horiguchi Building last Friday after being naturalized with her husband, Jaime Saiki, last Friday.

Over half of the school's student body came out to the U.S. District Court to congratulate the Saikis after their naturalization ceremony. The outside of the building overflowed with SIS students ranging from kindergarten to grade 12, some of them holding up congratulatory banners.

According to one of the teachers present, Saiki has been an educator with SIS since it was established back in 1994—24 years ago.

An overwhelmed Saiki said that she has lived and worked on Saipan for almost 25 years and she has been waiting for her naturalization. "We have been waiting for this moment for a long time, so this is a

dream come true," she said.

When asked how she felt about the amount of support she has from the institution she works for, she said she was speechless. "I am totally speechless. I am so touched, this was just so wonderful," she said.

The U.S. District Court's main courtroom was packed with SIS students and SIS instructors. Due to the overflow of students, some were placed in another room within the court where they were able to watch the naturalization ceremony live but many students and instructors were left outside because there was still not enough space to accommodate the group.

According to Jaime Saiki, the journey to naturalization was a lengthy one. "It's been a long journey to finally become Americans but it was worth it," he said.

The SIS students and teachers brought handwritten posters, some brought flowers, and many brought warm embraces.

Mili Saiki was moved to tears after seeing almost the entire school present in support and said that she was beyond joyous to have her SIS family there during such a monumental moment.

Mili Saiki and her husband were two out of 17 individuals who were naturalized last Friday. The 15 other naturalized citizens were Maria Ruby Cruz Acosta, Alfredo Andrada Acosta Jr., Agnes Endaya Camacho, Srinapa Chueasakul Eitz, Rosana Celeste Encio, Ana Lisa Umbao Gallego, Arlyne Galang Guanco, Xiaodan Jiang, Jocelyn Ong Mallari, Yolanda Hernandez Postrado, Ioulia Kim Safer, Christine Anneliese Schroeder, Richard Gorospe Soriano, Ferdinand Reforma Travilla, and Tanapon Unsa.

Saipan International School instructor Mili Saiki and her husband, Jaime Saiki, pose for a photo following their naturalization ceremony last Friday at the U.S. District Court.

KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA



**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB19-DCCA/DYS-028**

SUBMISSION DATE : JANUARY 07, 2018 • TIME: 09:30 A.M.

**"PURCHASE OF ONE(1) FIVE-DOOR MINI VAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT
OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO.1301, CAPITAL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ROBERT H. HUNTER
SECRETARY, DCCA

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP NO.: RFP19-OPD-029**

SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 07, 2018 • TIME: 10:00 A.M.

**"EMAIL, STORAGE, AND WEBSITE SERVICES FOR THE OFFICE
OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT(OPD)"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO.1301, CAPITAL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS PROJECT CAN BE MADE TO ERIN DERRINGTON BY EMAIL TO erind.opd@gmail.com, NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS, DECEMBER 27, 2018.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ KODEP OGUMORO-ULUDONG
DIRECTOR, OPD

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
ADDENDUM NO. 1
RFP19-GOV-027**

**"MULTI-DISCIPLINARY PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY SERVICES
FOR THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR"**

December 17, 2018

This addendum is issued to re-schedule the proposal questionnaire deadline and the proposal submission and opening deadline.

Issuance Date of the Addendum: December 18, 2019

Closing Date/Time: December 31, 2018 at 1:00 p.m., Chamorro Standard time is changed to read January 31, 2019 at 10:00 a.m., Chamorro Standard Time.

- > Pre-proposal Questions – Any pre-proposal questions and/or clarifications shall be submitted to Glenna SP Reyes in writing through electronic mail at glenna.sp.reyes.ao@gmail.com no later than 5:00 p.m., Chamorro Standard Time on December 07, 2018 is changed to read no later than the close of business January 07, 2019. To delete: The Division of Procurement and Supply shall issue any addenda to address any questions and/or clarifications as necessary, no later than December 21, 2018. To add: All questions and answers shall be shared with all prospective/potential proposers.
- > Proposers located outside of the Commonwealth may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their proposals by submitting a Notice of Intent to Propose. Notice of Intent to Propose must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 1:00 p.m., Chamorro Standard Time, December 31, 2018 is changed to read no later than 10:00 a.m., Chamorro Standard Time, January 31, 2019 and may be transmitted via electronic mail communication to procurement@cnmidof.net or via facsimile to (670) 664-1515.
- > Proposals submitted by firms outside the Commonwealth must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service by December 31, 2018 is changed to read January 31, 2019 and mailed to the Office of the Director of Procurement and Supply; P.O. Box 510008, Saipan MP, 96950. The proposal documents must be received at the Office of the Director of Procurement and Supply, Capitol Hill, Saipan no later than the close of business January 07, 2019 is changed to read no later than the close of business February 11, 2019.

All other requirements of the Request for Proposal project package shall remain as stated.

The provisions of the CNMI Procurement Regulations, NMIAC Section 70-30.3-725 and 70-30.3-730 prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks, and Contingent Fees shall apply.

The CNMI Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids or portions thereof, and waive any immaterial defects if to do so would be in the best interest of the CNMI government.

/S/ RALPH DLG. TORRES
GOVERNOR

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP NO.: RFP19-OPD-031**

SUBMISSION DATE: DECEMBER 27, 2018 • TIME: 09:30 A.M.

**"HIGH RESOLUTION IMAGERY OF SAIPAN,
TINIAN, AND ROTA FOR THE OFFICE OF PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT (OPD)"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS PROJECT CAN BE MADE TO MR. KODEP OGUMORO-ULUDONG, DIRECTOR OF OPD, BY EMAIL TO Kodep.uludong@gov.mp NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS, DECEMBER 20, 2018.

PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE IS SCHEDULED FOR DECEMBER 19, 2018 AT 10:00 A.M., LOCAL TIME AT THE OFFICE OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN CAPITOL HILL, LOCATED ON THE 1ST FLOOR, GOVERNOR'S OFFICE. THE PREPROPOSAL CONFERENCE IS NOT MANDATORY.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ELIZABETH S. BALAJADIA
ACTING DIRECTOR, OPD

/S/ JOSEPH A. TUDELA
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Hospitalized with mental illness, how was a killer able to buy a gun?

A man who had spent time in a mental institution just seven months earlier walked into a Fort Mill, S.C., Cabela's, bought a gun, walked out with it and an hour later shot a 19-year-old grocery worker five times, killing her.

How is this possible?

Christopher Benjamin Mendez had said he was having suicidal and homicidal thoughts and as a result spent more than a week in hospitals being treated for mental illness in June 2017, Solicitor Kevin Brackett told the Observer editorial board.

But that wasn't even a speed bump in his buying a gun. On Jan. 23, 2018, he went to Cabela's and on a required form checked "no," he had not ever been committed to a mental institution. The clerk ran Mendez's application through the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, which approved the sale.

About an hour later, Mendez gunned down Karson Whitesell in an act of random violence. On Tuesday, he was sentenced to life in prison without parole.

"Obviously nobody on either side of the gun rights issue is interested in having people who are mentally ill being able to purchase firearms," Brackett said, according to the Rock Hill Herald. "This is apparently a defect in our system, because he was able to check 'no' and walk out of Cabela's that day with a .45."

People who are involuntarily committed to a mental institution are banned from buying guns. Why wasn't Mendez in the national database as being prohibited from buying a gun given his commitment to a mental institution? And could others slip through the same crack in the system?

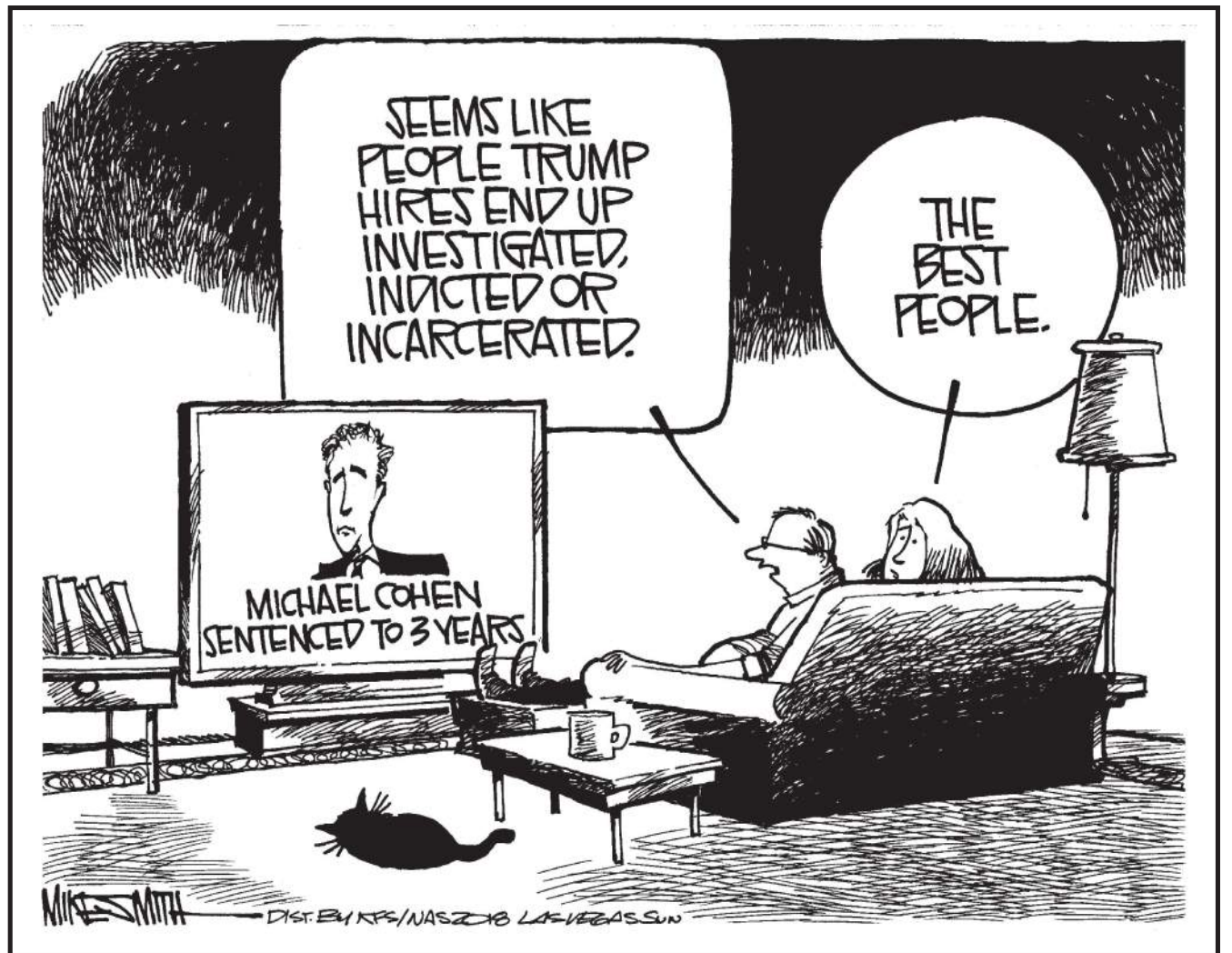
In response to questions from the Observer editorial board, Brackett did some more digging. This is what he found:

Mendez voluntarily went to Springs Memorial Hospital in Lancaster saying he had suicidal and homicidal thoughts. Doctors examined him, concluded he was a danger and admitted him involuntarily to Colleton Medical Center in Walterboro. He was there a week, got on medication, then attended a court hearing. By that time he had improved and the judge did not commit him to the hospital. So he was involuntarily admitted by a doctor but not involuntarily committed by a judge. That's why his information was never sent to the national database.

It appears South Carolina, Cabela's and NICS all followed the procedure set out in law. Yet a man who said he was having homicidal thoughts could buy a gun on demand. It's impossible to know how many other people are doing the same thing.

Brackett suggests, and we agree, that states should con-

See HOSPITALIZED on Next Page



Teaching first

Author's Note: Originally published on Nov. 30, 2015. As we begin this season of reflection, "Teaching First" is worthy of another look as we focus on the first purpose of the university and the importance of staying true to our roots.

Forward focus is essential. Over the past four decades, many faculty and university leaders have begun to believe that research and scholarly activity are more important than teaching. Graduate assistants, adjunct and non-tenure-track faculty may be excellent teachers, but they have a tenuous relationship to the institution by definition, and are paid like janitors, and in the best instances, plumbers. Tolerating this equates teaching to caring for dirty floors or fixing leaking pipes. This is not a diminishment of the janitor or plumbers who know their craft. Instead, it's a failing of leaders and faculty who don't. And universities struggle.

For example, weak-kneed science abounds at too many universities, even purportedly good ones. The pressure to publish and its seemingly invincible measurability drives faculty to publish junk. Academic conferences with peer-reviewed (other scientists affirm the work's value) proceedings, Web-based journals with battalions of "peer" reviewers, and willing faculty in the chase for tenure put out junk. I wish there was a better word for it. It is so pervasive that university leadership won't call it what it is for fear of upsetting the apple cart, or, equally disturbing, throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Something is broken, and the basis of science, the idea of being able to replicate the finding of an experiment as reported, is in question. John Ioannidis, a medical professor at Stanford University, makes the point adamantly, "...false findings may be the majority or even the vast majority of published research claims." Way too much of what is published is junk.

As a faculty member and university leader, I have participated in the perpetuation of weak scholarship for its superficial clarity in professorial evaluation at the expense of measuring good teaching because it is purportedly too difficult to measure. Yet we all know excellent teaching when we see it, and worse yet, we hold our noses and turn our heads winking-and-nodding as miserable teaching is passed off as something other than what it is: junk. The system is difficult to buck. The crime is simply understood: it is easier to assuage tenure protected poor teachers with the myth that even poor scholarship has more value when published than the negative impact of poor teaching. Absolutely wrong. The best research universities are frequently recognized for excellence in teaching. Quality follows quality and effective

By **WALTER V. WENDLER**
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Walter V. Wendler is president of West Texas A&M University. His reflections are available at www.walterwendler.com.



universities demand it in every aspect of work.

The peer review process is blind. Unknown (blind) reviewers ostensibly weeding out bias, professional jealousy, favoritism and cronyism review the scholar's work. These same principles should be applied to teaching. When students subjected to weak-kneed teaching are willing to say so through teaching feedback instruments, and do so semester after semester, their concerns should be attended to with forcefulness akin to the gospel-like accolades of blind peer review. Instead, universities are often dismissive of consistently poor teaching evaluations, with the admonition that "students" are not fit to judge. The result is predictable: Junk science is heralded as valuable scholarly activity. Junk teaching is ignored: Students don't know what they're talking about.

A faculty member once came to see me regarding her teaching evaluations. She was ecstatic about her "marks," and felt that this response from students was ironclad evidence of teaching excellence. The next semester she posted a significantly lower assessment of teaching prowess from her students. Her response? Students "were just students" and could not be counted upon to rightly judge her ability to teach. I said, "Jane (not her real name), how can the students go from experts to morons in less than 12 months? You can't have it both ways." Upon reflection, she concurred that her view of the students' ability to "grade" her teaching was biased by the kind of grade she "earned."

Additionally, the focus on the value of scholarship is its impact on student learning—teaching first—and nothing else. Every proposal for a sabbatical, or request for university support for research, should require a pedagogical impact report estimating the influence of the intellectual work on teaching.

Such interdependency is the mark of a great university. Too many universities, worry about too much that has too little to do with excellent teaching.

Predictably, they struggle.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

4 things to do before buying property in the CNMI

By JORDAN SUNDELL
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Hello, CNMI. I'm a new columnist for the *Saipan Tribune*. I'm also a lawyer specializing in business and real-estate law who has worked for the Supreme Court, Bridge Capital, and now several real estate companies, including Joint Marketing. Over the coming months, this column will tackle a variety of business and real estate topics, mostly from a legal angle.

Now let's get started: Four things to do before buying property to prevent unhappy discoveries after it becomes yours.

First, figure out who actually owns the property. This sounds obvious but people occasionally buy property from people who don't actually own the property.

In some cases, a seller mistakenly believes that they own the property. For example, a family might agree on how to distribute property after a loved one passed away without going through the probate process. And then later memories change, leaving ownership disputed.

In less-innocent cases, the seller is conning a buyer. They tell you that the property has been in their family for years; they may

even cry over the idea of parting with it. But they assure you that if you pay right away, they will let it go.

The easiest and safest way to find out whether the seller actually owns the property is to obtain a preliminary title report. A PTR is not a government document; instead, it is a report issued by a title-insurance company describing the chain of ownership from the first owner to the current owner. It will also say if the property has been leased and whether there are any mortgages or other liens on the property.

On Saipan, two companies currently issue PTRs: Security Title and Pacific American Title. The first is located on Capital Hill; the second is in Susupe. They normally issue a PTR within one to three weeks but will expedite the process for an extra fee.

While verifying ownership, the next safeguard is to double-check the property's boundaries. Just because a seller claims that a property has certain boundaries doesn't make it so.

Take a common example. Let's say a father owns a big chunk of land and then passes away, leaving five children. Following probate, each child gets one-fifth of the land. Over 20 years, each uses the land with little thought about the formal boundaries of each property. Later, one of the children sells their piece to someone outside the family. What happens next? That's right: Disagreements about where one property ends and the other begins.

Or consider another surprisingly frequent event. An investor sees a building. They like it. They can see themselves rolling in the revenue. All they need to do is buy the building, renovate it, and then rent it out. But as they start renovating, they discover one of the building's walls is actually built on a neighboring lot. And knocking down the encroaching wall would destroy the building or, at least, dramatically increase the cost of renovating. Much better to find that out before buying the building.

So, how does a careful buyer prevent boundary problems from transforming their investment into a nightmare? Get a boundary survey from a seasoned surveyor. Doing so will confirm access points and boundary lines as well as identifying any encroachments.

Moving to the third due-diligence task, make sure that you can use the property for the purpose you intend. You may not

By JORDAN SUNDELL
Special to the Saipan Tribune



Jordan Sundell is a lawyer primarily practicing business and real-estate law. He formerly worked for the CNMI Supreme Court and Bridge Capital and is now general counsel for several real-estate companies, including Joint Marketing. His columns—focused mainly on real estate and small business—are published every other Tuesday.

be able to. That is because Saipan has a zoning law establishing how different areas of the island can be used. For example, if a part of the island has been designated as a residential area, then it generally cannot be used for a non-residential purpose like a hotel, a hospital, or a factory—although occasionally the zoning board or the Legislature may grant an exception.

Other zoning restrictions may also apply. The zoning law is long and detailed with many technical requirements stretching from how far to set back buildings from roads, boundaries, and high watermarks to how much parking is needed to how much of a storefront window can be used for advertisements.

The fourth due-diligence task is perhaps the most overlooked: Investigate whether the property has any environmental issues. For instance, is there a wetland on the property? If so, CNMI law strongly restricts and sometimes flatly prohibits development. Is the property in a floodplain? Again, development restrictions may apply (on top of all the other issues that apply to building in a flood-prone location). Are there any endangered animals on the property? If so, you will need to reach into your wallet to pay remediation costs. You may also need to halt your project until the issue has been addressed, a process that can take half a year or more.

Bottom line: Many traps are lurking for the investor who buys property too fast, including many not discussed here. To minimize the chance of springing a nasty trap, it's important to do your homework before handing over your hard-earned money. Waiting until afterwards is too late.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Trailers in Saipan's beaches?

A recent Saipan local law authored and sponsored by Rep. John Paul Sablan seeks to amend the Saipan zoning law to authorize placing mobile homes and container houses along Beach Road in Garapan and all along the beaches on the western side of Saipan. Yes, you read that right: trailers and shipping containers converted into "houses" are to be allowed all along our precious beaches.

Can you imagine lawmakers so depraved as to legalize damaging our beautiful, pristine, protected beaches by putting up slum dwellings right beside the beach? I don't know what you call it but I call it deplorable. Someone or some group is behind this poor choice and they will get the benefit. The rest of us will only receive the negatives—reduced quality of life, lower property values, and slums along our public beaches is what we residents will get.

We will all get over the horrible damage Super Typhoon Yutu has done to us and our beautiful islands. Long after Yutu becomes just a bad memory, we will still be looking at slum dwelling trailer houses on our beaches if we allow these conflicted legislators to get away with this bill.

S.L.B. 20-60, authored by Rep. John Paul Sablan, must be stopped in its tracks. It was snuck in under the cover last week on Oct. 19. Don't let them get away with this travesty. Call your representative and all three Saipan senators immediately and tell him or her to vote this down.

Stanley McGinnis Torres
McGinnis Hill, Saipan

HOSPITALIZED

From Page 10

sider whether patients who have been involuntarily admitted by a doctor should be reported to the federal database just as those committed by a judge are. Or South Carolina and other states could consider having such patients referred to judges who would assess whether that person's right to own firearms should be temporarily suspended. Several states have adopted laws establishing extreme risk protection orders, or ERPOs. Under those, family members or law enforcement can petition a court to temporarily suspend a person's gun-ownership rights if he is deemed an imminent danger to himself or others.

Mendez should not have been able to purchase a gun, given the danger he posed at the time. South Carolina, North Carolina and other states need to close this hole in the safety net.

(c) 2018 *The Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, N.C.)

The Saudis have only themselves to blame

For the past month, President Donald Trump and members of his Cabinet have warned members of Congress not to rock the boat too much about Saudi Arabia's murder and dismemberment of the journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

On Thursday the Senate disregarded those warnings and passed two important pieces of legislation. The first was a resolution—with no opposition—that places responsibility for Khashoggi's death squarely on Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The second bill, which passed by a vote of 56 to 41, would cut off all U.S. assistance to the Saudi war in Yemen.

The silver lining here for the Saudis is that these rebukes will not end U.S. support for its war in Yemen. There is no appetite in the House to take up the Yemen legislation. And there are not enough votes in the Senate to overcome a presidential veto.

That said, the Saudis are stung. The crown prince, known as MBS, is the de facto head of the Saudi state. An indictment of him in the murder of Khashoggi is an indictment of the whole royal family. Congressional sources tell me Saudi diplomats worked frantically this week trying to get lawmakers to oppose that resolution.

Maybe their failure can be turned into a teaching moment. Ever since the world turned its attention to the murder of Khashoggi, senior U.S. officials and some members of Congress have urged MBS and his aides to take concrete steps to address their critics on Capitol Hill. An easy step would have been to release political prisoners.

One such political prisoner is Raif Badawi. He was arrested in 2012—before MBS became crown prince—on charges of insulting Islam. His real crime was writing about his desire for a more liberal Saudi Arabia. Since his arrest he has been flogged and had his sentence increased.

MBS could also stop arresting Saudi women activists, and re-

By ELI LAKE
Bloomberg News



Eli Lake is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering national security and foreign policy. He was the senior national security correspondent for the Daily Beast and covered national security and intelligence for the Washington Times, the New York Sun and UPI.






lease those already in custody. Despite lifting the ban on women driving this year, MBS has also cracked down on those citizens who had been clamoring for that reform.

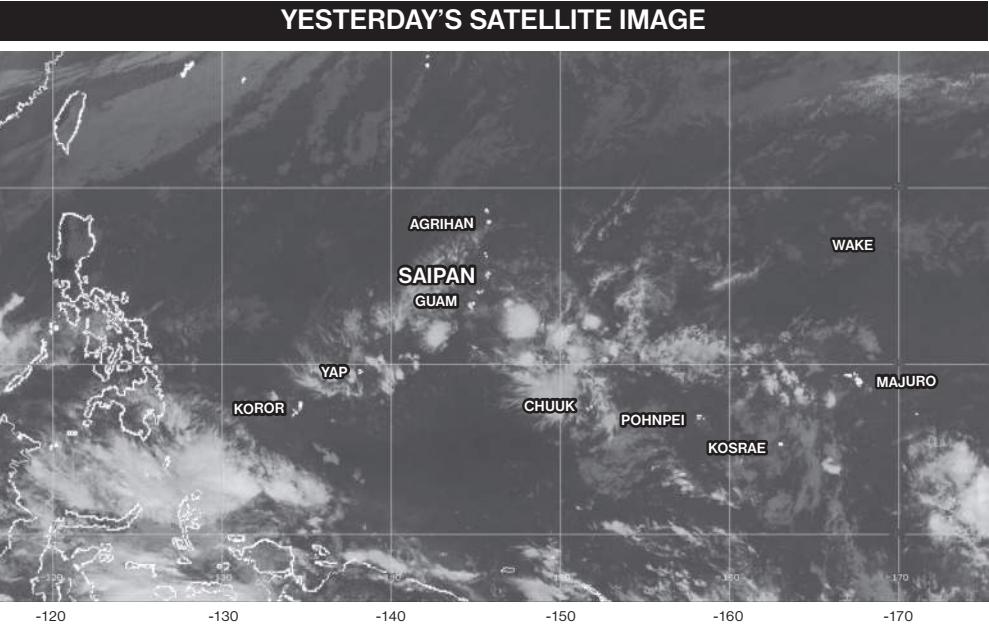
None of this, ostensibly, should be too hard for MBS. When he visited the U.S. a year ago, he presented himself as a liberal reformer. It's one of the reasons there were not enough votes this spring in the Senate to pass the legislation cutting off U.S. support for the Saudi war in Yemen.

Instead, the Saudis ignored the Trump administration and members of Congress. The activists and Badawi remain in prison. And leading senators who would normally defend the U.S.-Saudi relationship are now condemning a crown prince they hoped would make his country a more open society. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who rarely rocks the boat in foreign policy, was a cosponsor of the resolution that blamed MBS for the Khashoggi murder.

Some of this backlash was both inevitable and warranted. The Saudis had a chance this week to earn a little good will Washington. They squandered it—a missed opportunity they may regret when the new Congress, and the new Democratic-controlled House, convenes next month.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
									
Cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. East winds 15 to 20 mph.		Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms. East winds 15 to 20 mph.		Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.	
87°	78°	87°	78°	87°	77°	88°	77°	88°	77°



PICTURE TIME: 7:35 AM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2018
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A surface trough is moving through the Marianas and most of the showers have passed to the west. Some additional showers are expected later this morning, so have kept scattered coverage in the forecast for the morning hours, though that could end up being generous. Isolated showers and thunderstorms are expected in the afternoon. Another surface trough will move through on Tuesday and have kept scattered showers in the forecast, though the ECMWF is less robust on shower chances than the GFS. Yet another trough is expected to move through on Thursday, with the possibility of more showers. However, by the weekend, it looks like a drier weather pattern will settle in across the region and that will hold into early next week.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	87° / 79°	
Palau	Partly Cloudy	85° / 78°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	87° / 80°	
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	86° / 80°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°	

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Showers	73° / 63°	
Beijing	Sunny	46° / 21°	
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	73° / 68°	
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	81° / 67°	
London	Partly Cloudy	52° / 45°	
Los Angeles	Sunny	67° / 51°	
Manila	Partly Cloudy	88° / 75°	
Melbourne	Cloudy	79° / 63°	
Miami	Mostly Sunny	75° / 68°	
New York	Sunny	39° / 28°	
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	54° / 45°	
Paris	Sunny	46° / 45°	
Busan	Mostly Sunny	55° / 43°	
Rome	Sunny	54° / 34°	
Salem	Mostly Sunny	62° / 41°	
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	58° / 50°	
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	43° / 25°	
Tokyo	Sunny	55° / 39°	
Washington, DC	Sunny	44° / 29°	



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- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
4:05 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.36	
9:31 AM	LOW TIDE	0.75	
3:54 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.92	
11:01 PM	LOW TIDE	0.28	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Wednesday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Thursday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Friday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Saturday	6:38 AM	5:52 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	1:58 AM	2:12 PM
Wednesday	-	2:50 AM	2:54 PM
Thursday	-	3:44 AM	3:40 PM
Friday	-	4:42 AM	4:31 PM
Saturday	-	5:43 AM	5:27 PM

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 20, 2018							
DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:15am	9:55am	Daily	UA174	7:30am	8:11am	Daily
UA105	4:45pm	5:25pm	2, 4	UA104	3:00pm	3:41pm	2, 4
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS) – temporarily suspended				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN – temporarily suspended			
7C3451	3:15am	6:30am	Daily	7C3452	9:35pm	2:00am+1	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
				7C3452	10:05pm	2:00am+1	1
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)				SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily	7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
Temporarily suspended:				Temporarily suspended:			
TW9308	1:10am	4:10am	3, 4	TW9307	6:30pm	12:10am+1	2, 3
TW308	1:35am	5:20am	Daily	TW307	7:00pm	12:35am+1	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ626	2:20am	6:00am	1	TW307	7:05pm	12:35am+1	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
TW9308	3:20am	6:30am	2	OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
TW9308	3:25am	6:30am	5	TW9307	9:00pm	2:20am+1	1
7C3403	4:35am	8:25am	Daily	TW9307	9:05pm	2:25am+1	4
				7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)				SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8648	6:10am	8:50am	1, 4, 5, 7	3U8647	10:20pm	4:50am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH)				HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN			
JD396	7:30am	11:00am	1	JD395	8:05am	3:30pm	4
JD396	4:50pm	7:55pm	4	JD395	9:35pm	5:00am+1	7
SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)				GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN			
3U8646	4:30am	7:55am	2, 6	3U8645	7:55pm	2:40am+1	1, 5
SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK) – resume from Nov 27				BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN			
MU764	1:30am	6:35am	3, 5, 7	MU763	4:40pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	9:15am	9:40pm	2, 5 via GUM	UA182/174	12:40am	8:11am+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA117/183	9:15am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM	PR110/UA174	10:05pm	8:11am+1	Daily via GUM
UA117/193	9:15am	11:50pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR	UA192/174	10:30pm	8:11am+1	2, 5 via GUM-ROR
UA105/183	4:45pm	9:50pm	2, 4 via GUM	UA184/174	10:55pm	8:11am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)				HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
HX077	1:50am	5:15am	1, 4	HX076	5:15pm	12:15am+1	3, 7
U043	5:45am	8:40am	1, 3, 5, 7	U042	6:50pm	1:45am+1	7
UA117/159	9:15am	11:00pm	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via GUM	U042	9:30pm	4:25am+1	2, 4, 6
				UA116/174	11:45pm	8:11am+1	2, 4, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U Sichuan Airlines, 7C Jeju Air, DL Delta Airlines, JD Beijing Capital, UO HK Express, HX HongKong Airlines, MU China Eastern, OZ Asiana Airlines, TW t'way Air, UA United Airlines, PR PAL Express; ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.									
SAIPAN TO ROTA				1203	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily		
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1204	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily		
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily	1205	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily		
1302	11:30AM	12:00PM	Daily	1206	12:00PM	12:15PM	Daily		
1303	4:00PM	4:30PM	Daily	1207	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily		
ROTA TO SAIPAN				1208	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily		
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1209	3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily		
3101	8:15AM	8:45AM	Daily	1210	4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily		
3102	1:45PM	2:15PM	Daily	1211	5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily		
3103	4:45PM	5:15PM	Daily	1212	6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily		
ROTA TO GUAM				TINIAN TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY		
3401	12:15PM	12:45PM	Daily	2102	7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily		
GUAM TO ROTA				2103	8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily		
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2104	9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily		
4301	1:00PM	1:30PM	Daily	2105	10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily		
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				2106	11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily		
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2107	12:30PM	12:45PM	Daily		
1201	7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily	2108	1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily		
1202	8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily	2109	2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily		
				2110	3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily		
				2111	4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily		
				2112	5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily		
				2113	6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily		

Business

Kushner-linked firm targets richer areas in program for poor

WASHINGTON (AP)—A real estate investment firm co-founded by President Donald Trump's son-in-law and adviser, Jared Kushner, is betting big on the administration's Opportunity Zone tax breaks but isn't that interested in steering its investors to the poorest, most-

downtrodden areas that the program seeks to revitalize.

New York-based Cadre, in which Kushner still holds at least a \$25 million passive stake, made it clear to potential investors in recent marketing materials that it doesn't plan to look for development deals in most of those zones

UK ministers seek to downplay chance of second Brexit vote

LONDON (AP)—Supporters of British Prime Minister Theresa May dampened suggestions Sunday that the government is planning a second referendum on whether to leave the European Union, arguing that another Brexit vote would exacerbate divisions in the U.K., not heal them.

International Trade Secretary Liam Fox told the BBC that holding another vote on Britain's EU membership would settle little in a country that backed leaving the EU in 2016 by 51.9 percent with the highest turnout for a U.K. vote since 1992.

"Suppose we had another referendum. Supposing the 'remain' side won it by 52 to 48, but it was on a lower turnout - entirely possible," Fox said. "If there is another referendum, which I don't think there will be, people like me will be immediately demanding it's best of three. Where does that end up?"

The comments come as Britain struggles for a way forward after days of political drama because of unease with the terms of May's deal to leave the 28-nation bloc. The British Parliament was supposed to vote on May's Brexit plan last week, but she postponed it after it became clear that lawmakers would deci-

sively reject it.

Lawmakers were outraged at not having a chance to have their say. May's own Conservative Party triggered a confidence vote in her party leadership, which she won, but a third of her party's lawmakers revolted against her.

Unable to secure any concessions from the EU at a summit, May faced reports in the Sunday Times that said her de-facto deputy, Cabinet Office Minister David Lidington, held talks with Labour lawmakers aimed at holding another Brexit vote.

In response, Lidington tweeted a link to a record of parliamentary proceedings in which he explained how a second vote could be "divisive not decisive."

May's chief of staff, Gavin Barwell, tweeted "Happy to confirm I am (asterisk)not(asterisk) planning a 2nd referendum with political opponents (or anyone else to anticipate the next question)"

With little time to resolve the impasse before Britain's departure from the EU on March 29, fears are growing that Britain could leave the bloc with no deal at all—a situation with potentially devastating consequences for the U.K. economy.



In this Dec. 13, 2018, photo, White House senior adviser Jared Kushner listens during a meeting between President Donald Trump and newly elected governors in the Cabinet Room of the White House in Washington.

because of their "unfavorable growth prospects."

Instead, Cadre says it will target a "small subset" of zones in such cities as Los Angeles, Seattle and Miami where both populations and incomes are already set to rise faster than the national average.

Cadre is a high-profile example of how early investor interest in the program appears focused on the places that need it the least: zones that qualified for the tax breaks despite already drawing substantial investment or are undergoing obvious gentrification.

Among the examples of such zones is a swath of the Upper East Side of Manhattan that includes the top of Fifth Avenue's Museum Mile, where three-bedroom apartments overlooking Central Park sell for \$4 million. An-

other is Ledroit Park in the nation's capital, which falls mostly in what real estate blog Curbed has anointed Washington's "most gentrified" ZIP code. Yet another Opportunity Zone includes part of The Willows neighborhood of Menlo Park, California, less than 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) from Stanford's campus, where the tech boom has driven home prices to \$1,500 per square foot, 10 times the national average. The Opportunity Zone where Amazon put its New York City headquarters in Queens has a median household income of more than \$130,000.

"It's hard to imagine why we should be subsidizing that," said Brett Theodos, a researcher whose Urban Institute analysis found nearly one-third of the nation's more than 8,700 Opportunity Zones are showing signs of

pre-existing heavy investment. "These investors are not bad people. They are responding to the incentives."

Such is the major criticism of the Investing in Opportunity Act, which became law last December as part of the Republican-sponsored tax overhaul. Promoted by Trump in a White House event this past week, it offers developers potentially millions of dollars in capital gains tax breaks to invest in zones selected by states based on such factors as high poverty and low income.

While the program highlights an average 32 percent poverty rate in the zones, it includes a wide range of areas—and allows "contiguous" tracts that might not be low-income but are close enough to distressed areas to qualify.

Cadre said in a statement to The Associated Press that the neighborhoods it is targeting

for investment may be poised for growth but still exhibit low median incomes and are "capital deprived."

"At the end of the day, the Opportunity Zone tax benefits only kick in if we succeed for the communities in which we invest," the statement said.

There's no evidence the administration sought to include better-off Opportunity Zones in the program. A White House spokesman told the AP this past week that the choice of the zones was up to the states. The Treasury Department, which certified the final roster of zones, declined to comment on the presence of gentrified areas in the program.

For some funds, the obvious gentrification of some zones was an explicit selling point, a much safer bet than putting money in seriously distressed areas.

Anthony Scaramucci, the hedge fund executive who was briefly the White House's communications director for Trump, is trying to raise as much as \$3 billion for Opportunity Zone projects. On a marketing call this past week, he pitched both a warehouse project in Savannah, Georgia, and a "swanky" hotel project in Oakland, California.

"For those of you who have yet to go to that part of the Bay Area, I can tell you that it is fully gentrifying," Scaramucci said.

Fundrise, another Opportunity Zone fund that is trying to raise \$500 million for investments, is targeting many of the same areas as Cadre, ranking its "Top Ten" targets for Opportunity Zone investing based on which have the fastest-rising housing costs.

Choosing between the right work and the right workplace

Q : After a lengthy series of interviews with a company in my community, I was recently given a job offer. The problem is that I have conflicting feelings about whether to accept.

The job itself is quite appealing and in line with my career goals. However, the interview process was extremely disorganized, and I found it difficult to communicate with the hiring manager. He was not very friendly and seemed reluctant to answer reasonable questions.

As an alternative, I do have an offer from another business. But even though I really liked the woman who would be my boss, I don't believe I would enjoy the work. I am more than ready to end this job search, but I'm afraid of making a mistake. What do you think?

A: If you already see danger signs, then you should proceed with caution. Employers typically put their best foot forward when courting candidates, so these troubling traits could become much worse once you're actually on the payroll.

A disjointed hiring process often reflects a chaotic company culture, and managers who communicate poorly during interviews seldom improve once the applicant is on board. While

this doesn't mean you should automatically reject a job you might enjoy, there are definitely a few red flags.

To get some informed opinions, make an effort to network with people who have worked for this business in the past. By asking questions about organizational culture and leadership style, you may be able to determine whether this position is a good opportunity or a potential nightmare.

Unfortunately, your backup job sounds even worse, since hating the work could make life miserable on a daily basis. Therefore, looking for a better alternative might be a wise move. But if finances force you to accept one of these imperfect offers, try to appreciate the positives, accept the shortcomings, and be thankful for the paycheck.

Q: I was just given a small Christmas gift by a coworker who recently joined our company. She also gave presents to the other three people on our team. Our group has never exchanged gifts in the past, so I'm not sure how to respond.

Since I have no desire to encourage this tradition, I don't plan to rush out and find some trinket to offer in return. To me, required gift-giving just adds an unwelcome burden to an already busy holiday season. Is it wrong to accept her

YOUR OFFICE COACH

By MARIE G. MCINTYRE

Tribune News Service

Marie G. McIntyre is a workplace coach and the author of "Secrets to Winning at Office Politics." Send in questions and get free coaching tips at <http://www.yourofficecoach.com>, or follow her on Twitter @officecoach.



present without giving one back?

A: Presumably, your coworker was simply trying to spread holiday cheer and had no expectation of reciprocity. At least, that's the spirit in which gifts should be given. Since this was a spontaneous gesture on her part, you have no obligation to balance the scales with an emergency shopping trip.

Rejecting her gift would be insensitive and rude, so just thank her for her thoughtfulness and wish her a merry Christmas. Then, before the next holiday season, initiate a discussion with your team members about how they would like to celebrate. This should give you an opportunity to nix the gift-giving and perhaps suggest a festive group lunch.

Nation

White House digs in on border wall demand, risking shutdown

WASHINGTON (AP)—The White House on Sunday pushed the federal government closer to the brink of a partial shutdown later this week, digging in on its demand for \$5 billion to build a border wall as congressional Democrats stood firm against it.

"We're going to do whatever is necessary to build the border wall to stop this ongoing crisis of illegal immigration," said White House senior adviser Stephen Miller.

Asked if that meant having a government shutdown, he said: "If it comes to it, absolutely."

Trump said last week he would be "proud" to have a shutdown to get Congress to approve a \$5 billion down payment to fulfill his campaign promise to build a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border. But the president doesn't have the votes from the Republican-controlled Congress to support funding for the wall at that level.

Democratic congressional leaders, Sen. Chuck Schumer and Rep. Nancy Pelosi, have proposed no more than \$1.6 billion, as outlined in a bipartisan Senate bill. The money would not go for the wall but for fencing upgrades and other border security. Democrats also offered to simply keep funding at its current level, \$1.3 billion.



In this Nov. 2, 2018, file photo, President Donald Trump's White House Senior Adviser Stephen Miller boards Air Force One for campaign rallies in West Virginia and Indiana, in Andrews Air Force Base, Md. The White House is digging in on its demand for \$5 billion to build a border wall as congressional Democrats stand firm against it, pushing the federal government closer to the brink of a partial shutdown.

Showing no signs of budging, Schumer said Sunday that it was up to Trump to decide whether parts of the federal government shut down at midnight Friday over his border wall, sending thousands of federal employees home without pay during the holidays.

About one-quarter of the government would be af-

ected, including the departments of Homeland Security, Transportation, Agriculture, State and Justice, as well as national parks.

"He is not going to get the wall in any form," Schumer said.

Both parties in Congress have suggested that Trump would likely need to make the next move to resolve the im-

passed. The House is taking an extended weekend break, returning Wednesday night. The Senate returns Monday after a three-day absence.

Trump had neither accepted nor rejected the Democrats' proposal as of Friday, according to the Democrats, telling them he would take a look. Trump will need Democratic votes either way, now or in the new year, for passage.

Wyoming Sen. John Barrasso, the No. 3 Republican in the Senate, said Republicans remain hopeful they can come up with a proposal that can be acceptable to Trump and pass both chambers. He suggested that could take the form of a stopgap bill that extends funding until January, or a longer-term bill that includes money for border security.

"There are a lot of things

you need to do with border security," he said. "One is a physical barrier but also the technology, the manpower, the enforcement, all of those things, and our current laws are in some ways an incentive for people to come to this country illegally, and they go through great risk and possibly great harm."

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, urged senators to revisit a bill she helped push earlier this year that would provide \$2.5 billion for border security, including physical barriers as well as technology and border patrol agents.

"There's absolutely no excuse to shut down government on this issue or any other issue," she said.

Schumer declined to say whether Democrats would be willing to consider proposals other than the two options that he and Pelosi offered.

Republicans "should join in one of these two proposals, which would get more than enough votes passed and avoid a shutdown," Schumer said. "Then, if the president wants to debate the wall next year, he can. I don't think he'll get it. But he shouldn't use innocent workers as hostage for his temper tantrum."

Miller and Barrasso spoke on CBS' "Face the Nation," Schumer appeared on NBC's "Meet the Press," and Collins was on ABC's "This Week."

Child's death highlights communication barriers on border

Shortly before a 7-year-old Guatemalan girl died in U.S. custody, her father signed a form stating that his daughter was in good health. But it's unclear how much the man understood on the form, which was written in English and read to him in Spanish by Border Patrol agents.

The death of Jakelin Caal highlights the communication challenges along the U.S.-Mexico border as agents come in contact with an increasing number of migrants who speak neither English nor Spanish.

Her father's native language is the Mayan tongue known as Q'eqchi'. His second language is Spanish. It's unclear whether something was lost in translation or whether it would have made a difference in saving Jakelin after the two were detained and underwent a health screening along a remote stretch of U.S.-Mexico border. But the case raises questions about the Border Patrol's use of English-only forms.

All agents are required to speak Spanish, and they receive formal Spanish training. Reading forms in Spanish is often

enough to pose basic questions. But some other Spanish-speaking migrants reported signing paperwork that they later said they did not understand.

Scores of immigrant parents who were separated from their children after crossing the border in the spring said they signed forms agreeing to be deported with the understanding that their kids would be returning with them, only to find themselves deported without them. Many had to wait months before being reunited with them in their homelands.

Jakelin and her father, Nery Gilberto Caal Cuz, were part of a group of 163 migrants arrested Dec. 6 near a border crossing in New Mexico. Hours later, they were placed on a bus to the nearest Border Patrol station, but Jakelin began vomiting and eventually stopped breathing. She later died at a Texas hospital.

Border Patrol officials on Friday said agents did everything they could to save the girl but that she had not had food or water for days. An initial screening showed no evidence of health problems, they

said, and her father spoke to them in Spanish and signed a form indicating she was in good health.

Attorneys in Texas representing Caal criticized U.S. officials for asking him to sign Form I-779, which asks a series of questions with check boxes of "yes" or "no." In the additional comments section on the form was written "claims good health."

"It is unacceptable for any government agency to have persons in custody sign documents in a language that they clearly do not understand," the attorneys said in a statement.

The family also disputed the accounts offered by U.S. officials that the girl walked for days in the desert without food or water before crossing. The father's lawyers said Caal took care of his daughter, giving her sufficient water and food, and she appeared to be in good health.

Jakelin's family is asking for an "objective and thorough" investigation to determine whether officials met standards for taking children into custody.

ACROSS THE NATION

Coast Guardsman kills wife, son, self at Florida home

HOMESTEAD, Fla. (AP)—Officials say a Coast Guardsman killed his wife and their 7-year-old son and then critically wounded their 8-year-old daughter before killing himself. Miami-Dade police and Coast Guard officials say 44-year-old Petty Officer First Class John Presnar fatally shot his 39-year-old wife Gretchen and shot their children early Sunday at their home south of Miami. He then shot himself. The children's names were not released. Police say an argument between Presnar and his wife escalated and her mother ran from the home. When officers arrived, they found the bodies and the wounded girl inside. The Coast Guard says Presnar had served since 2001 as an electronics technician. In a statement, the Coast Guard said it "is deeply saddened by this tragedy and our hearts go out to the family members."

Mom in toddler tussle video says she went into defense mode

NEW YORK (AP)—A mother who had her toddler yanked from her arms by New York police in a widely seen video said in an interview published Sunday that she went into "defense mode." "In my head, I told myself they're not going to let me leave," Jazmine Headley told The New York Times. "I was so afraid. I was combative with my thoughts." The video captured the chaotic scene that unfolded Dec. 7 as officers tried to remove Headley from a

crowded Brooklyn social services office, where she had sat on the floor for two hours because of a lack of chairs. Police were called when she refused a security guard's order to leave. Headley told the Times she was sitting on the floor with her back against the wall and talking to her son, who was in a stroller. She said she refused, pointing out trash and recycling bins against the wall on the other side of her son's stroller. "I just remember being talked to very viciously," she said. "It was more or less: 'You're going to do what I say, and that's it.'"

Higher percentage of California pot passing safety tests

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A higher percentage of California marijuana products are passing strict safety tests, but the sudden closing of a lab that state authorities found wasn't correctly checking for pesticides has raised new questions about the system intended to protect the purity and potency of legal cannabis. California broadly legalized marijuana at the start of the year, and mandatory testing began in July 1. During the first two months the failure rate was about 20 percent, but state data collected through November showed improvement—about 14 percent of nearly 24,000 products were blocked from store shelves by tests. Cannabis-infused cookies, candies and tinctures continued having the most trouble in test labs: About 26 percent were rejected, though that also was an improved rate compared to the July-August period, when one-third failed.

Asia

North Korea marks 7th anniversary of Kim Jong Il's death



AP
North Korean soldiers leave after paying their respects to the bronze statues of their late leaders Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il at Mansu Hill Grand Monument in Pyongyang, North Korea, Monday, Dec. 17, 2018.

PYONGYANG, North Korea (AP)—North Koreans are marking the seventh anniversary of the death of leader Kim Jong Il with visits to statues and vows of loyalty to his son, Kim Jong Un.

As snow fell Sunday, a steady flow of North Koreans offering flowers and paying respects to the late leader could be seen at Mansu Hill in central Pyongyang, the location of huge bronze statues of

the “Dear Leader” and national founder Kim Il Sung.

The anniversary observations were expected to continue through Monday across the country.

Though focused on remembrances of his father, the anniversary also marks Kim’s own rise to power.

The death of Kim Jong Il on Dec. 17, 2011, thrust his son into power when he was still in his late 20s and a virtual un-

known figure outside of the North. But, despite many predictions from outside experts that he wouldn’t be up to the task, Kim Jong Un has managed to consolidate power, bolster the country’s economy in the face of intense international sanctions and attain a goal his father and grandfather could only dream of—he is the first North Korean leader to possess an arsenal of nuclear weapons and long-range

missiles capable of reaching the United States.

As the nation remembered his father, there was no mention in the state media of the issues that have gotten the most attention elsewhere, including a flurry of speculation in South Korea that Kim might visit Seoul by the end of the year, or how he intends to deal with growing frustration in Washington over the slow pace of denuclearization talks between the two countries.

The North’s official Korean Central News Agency instead ran stories about memorials to Kim Jong Il in Libya, Russia and Serbia.

Even so, the anniversary was being watched closely for any signs of change or hints of what the country’s leadership may be planning in the months ahead.

With Kim’s power base

seemingly more solid than ever, and his recent effort to establish himself on the world stage through summits with President Donald Trump and others, North Korea watchers have been on the lookout for signs that his own personality cult is being bolstered.

Virtually all homes and public offices in North Korea feature portraits of the elder Kims, who are also memorialized in countless statues, mosaics and cenotaphs around the country. North Korean adults wear pins over their hearts bearing the likenesses of Kim Il Sung of Kim Jong Il, or both.

This year’s anniversary has so far offered no major departures from past precedent.

The North has yet to come out with a Kim Jong Un pin or to order his image join the others on every wall, though Kim

and his wife, Ri Sol Ju, have been referred to with increasingly lofty titles—“chairman” for Kim and “respected first lady” for Ri. A special portrait of the young chairman was unveiled recently at a ceremony to welcome the visit of Cuba’s president, but none have appeared in public since. And unlike his father and grandfather, Kim’s Jan. 8 birthday has yet to be declared a national holiday or even marked on most calendars.

None of that should be assumed to be a sign of weakness, however. It could in fact indicate strength.

Kim is generally afforded the same reverential treatment by the state media and for maintaining a respectful step behind his predecessors, he is credited with showing humility and confidence.

Sri Lankan president doubts he can work with reappointed PM

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—Sri Lanka’s president accused newly reappointed Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe of corrupt leadership in a scathing speech Sunday in which he voiced doubts about their ability to work together and signaled the 2-month political crisis is far from resolved.

President Maithripala Sirisena administered the oath that returned Wickremesinghe to office, then gave a speech soon after the ceremony, telling the prime minister and a group of his lawmakers that he can’t find people of honesty and integrity to help him take the country forward.

“With the issues we have, I am not sure what guarantees we have that we could go on this journey together,” Sirisena told Wickremesinghe.

The swearing in took place privately, with only a few law-

makers in attendance and media not permitted. It initially indicated an end to the impasse, but Sirisena’s speech is a sign of more acrimony, possibly leading to early parliamentary elections. A new Cabinet is expected to be sworn in soon.

Wickremesinghe spoke separately at his official residence and refrained from responding to Sirisena. “Now I will assume duties of the office of prime minister,” Wickremesinghe told his cheering supporters.

“Unfortunately, during the past few weeks, the progress of this country and the development programs that we undertook were stalled,” he said. “Not only that, the country went backward. Today we commit firstly to bring back normalcy and resuming the development program.”

In his televised speech,

Sirisena said his reasons for firing Wickremesinghe included a lack of interest in helping investigate an alleged insider trade during a bond issue, in which a former Central Bank governor who is a close friend of Wickremesinghe is implicated.

He also said Wickremesinghe’s ministers alienated Buddhist monks by having them arrested for keeping unlicensed captive elephants at temples. Sri Lanka is a predominantly Buddhist nation with an influential clergy.

Sirisena also criticized Wickremesinghe for investigations into alleged abuses during the long civil war that ended in 2009. The president said Wickremesinghe had only government soldiers arrested but had not looked into prosecuting former Tamil Tiger rebels he said were hiding in foreign countries.

Suspected gas explosion destroys eatery in Japan, hurts 42

TOKYO (AP)—A suspected gas explosion destroyed wooden buildings housing a restaurant and a real estate office in northern Japan on Sunday night, injuring 42 people, police and local media said.

The powerful explosion in Sapporo, the capital city of Japan’s northern main island of Hokkaido, shook nearby buildings, shattered windows and scattered wooden debris across the area. Some residents told reporters they

thought the blast was an earthquake.

One person was in serious condition, but police said the other injuries were mostly mild.

Police are investigating the cause of the explosion in Sapporo’s Toyohira district. Kyodo news agency reported that a gas safety center official noted five propane gas tanks outside of the pub and two outside the real estate office.

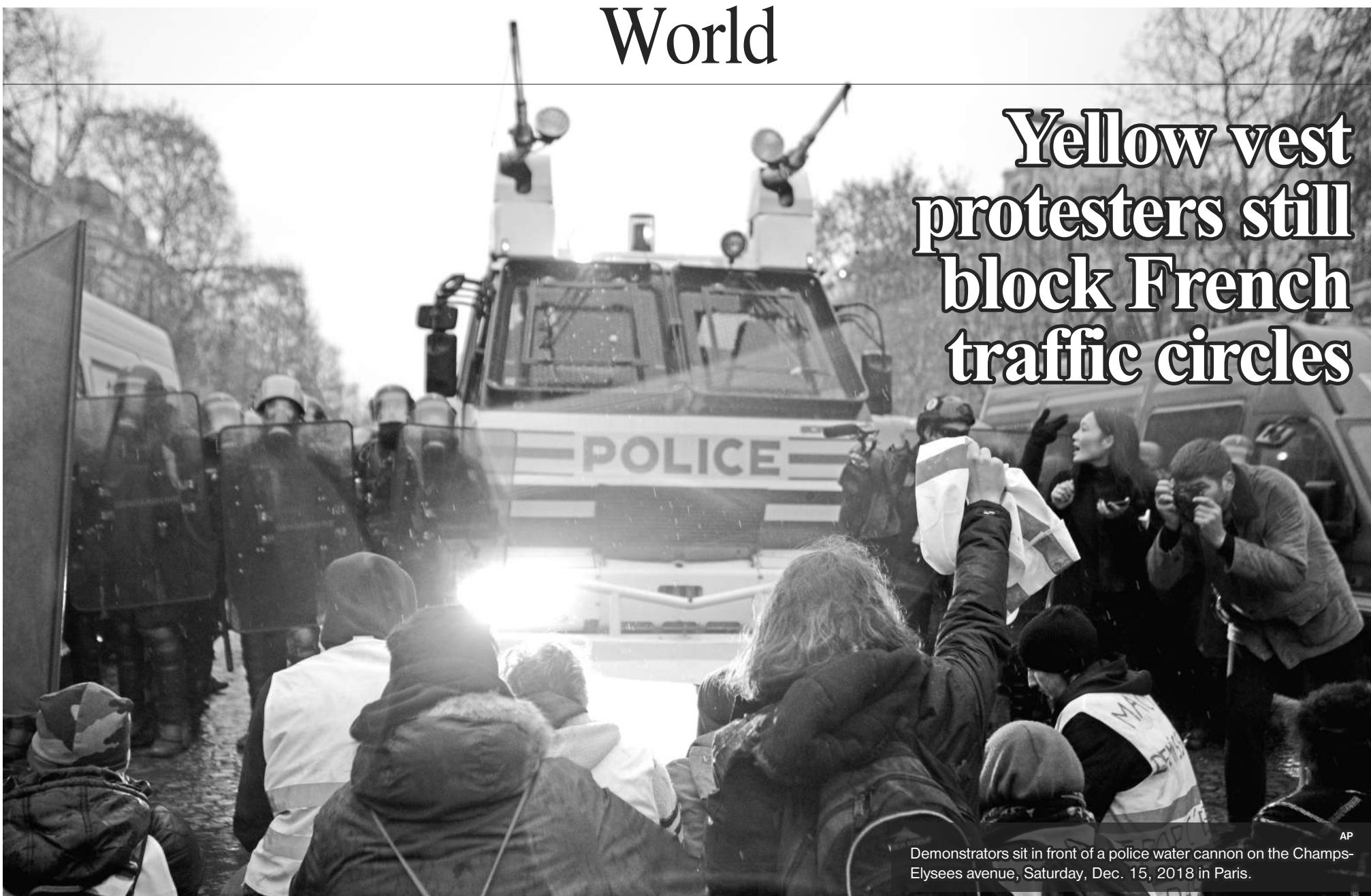
The fire burned for nearly six hours, Kyodo said, and

photographs and TV footage showed smoke rising above charred, collapsed debris as dozens of firefighters poured water onto the building. Windows on an apartment building next door were broken, and cars parked outside were partially covered with debris that had fallen on them.

A witness told Japanese public broadcaster NHK that he smelled gas after the sound of an explosion. It said neighbors were being provided shelter overnight.

World

Yellow vest protesters still block French traffic circles



Demonstrators sit in front of a police water cannon on the Champs-Élysées avenue, Saturday, Dec. 15, 2018 in Paris.

PARIS (AP)—Yellow vest protesters occupied dozens of traffic roundabouts across France on Sunday even as their movement for economic justice appeared to be losing momentum on the fifth straight weekend of protests.

The road blockades remained despite a call by Interior Minister Christophe Castaner to free the roundabouts from the traffic chaos

created by the protests. Eight people have died in incidents tied to the yellow vest movement, mostly from traffic accidents linked to roads blocked by protesters.

The demonstrators are demanding more measures to help France's workers and retirees and want top officials in President Emmanuel Macron's centrist government to resign, including

Macron himself.

Despite the cold weather, protesters occupying a roundabout near the southern city of Orange close to a major highway pledged to keep holding more demonstrations, including blocking fuel depots.

"Mr. Castaner, if you want us to clear roundabouts, you will need to offer your resignation. We don't need bandits of your kind," a protester identi-

fied as Nicolas told the BFM TV channel.

Some yellow vest protesters—whose movement takes its name from the safety garb that all French motorists must carry—set up a small fire with wooden planks and held a barbecue at a roundabout near the city of Reims in the Champagne region. Some of them wore Santa hats and deployed a banner that read "Revolution 2018."

On Saturday, yellow vest demonstrators took to the

streets in cities across France, including in Paris, but in far fewer numbers than on previous weekends: 69,000 compared to 125,000 a week before. Paris police had to fire tear gas and water cannon across the Champs-Élysées and some protesters scuffled with police.

In an effort to defuse France's social crisis, Macron has announced a series of measures aimed at improving people's spending power.

The package, which in-

cludes a 100-euro (\$113) monthly increase to the minimum wage, might have played a role in deterring protests but did not help improve Macron's popularity. According to an opinion poll published Sunday by the *Le Journal du Dimanche* newspaper, Macron's approval rate dipped to 23 percent in the last month.

The yellow vests movement brings together people of all political backgrounds with a multitude of demands.

Germany to compensate hundreds who fled Nazis as children

BERLIN (AP)—Germany has agreed to one-time payments for survivors, primarily Jews, who were evacuated from Nazi Germany as children, many of whom never saw their parents again, the organization that negotiates compensation with the German government said Monday.

The New York-based Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany said the government had agreed to payments of 2,500 euros (\$2,800) to those still alive from among the 10,000 people who fled on the so-called "Kindertransport."

This year is the 80th anniversary of beginning of the transport of the children to Britain from Nazi Germany and elsewhere in Europe.

About 1,000 survivors are thought to be alive today, with about half living in Britain, and the payment is seen as a "symbolic recognition of their suffering,"

Claims Conference negotiator Greg Schneider said.

"In almost all the cases the parents who remained were killed in concentration camps in the Holocaust and they have tremendous psychological issues," Schneider told *The Associated Press*.

Following the Nazis' anti-Jewish pogrom in November 1938 known as Kristallnacht, or the Night of Broken Glass, the British government agreed to allow an unspecified number of Jewish children as refugees from Nazi Germany or territories it had annexed.

Jewish groups inside Nazi Germany planned the transports, and the first arrived in Harwich on Dec. 2, 1938, according to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The last transport from Germany left Sept. 1, 1939 — the day World War II broke out with the Nazi invasion

of Poland — and the final transport from continental Europe left the Netherlands on May 14, 1940, the same day Dutch forces surrendered to the Nazis.

In all, about 10,000 children from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland were taken to Britain, about 7,500 of whom were Jewish, according to the museum. About half were placed with foster families, while the others stayed in hostels, schools or farms.

In addition to those who remained in Britain, many resettled in the U.S., Israel, Canada, Australia and elsewhere, Schneider said.

Today, survivors are at least in their 80s and most continue to look back on their escape as the defining moment of their lives as they were put alone onto trains into the unknown, saying goodbye to parents and siblings often for the last time, Schneider said.

Bomb explodes outside private Greek TV station, no one hurt

ATHENS, Greece (AP)—A powerful bomb exploded outside private Greek television station Skai early Monday, causing extensive damage but no injuries.

Police said the blast occurred at 2:35 a.m. outside the broadcaster's headquarters in a coastal area near Athens after telephoned warnings to a news website and another TV station prompted authorities to evacuate the building.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility. Armed far-left and anarchist organizations have attacked news media outlets in the past.

"This was a strike against democracy. Thankfully, there was only material damage — it's a relief that no one was hurt — following the swift action taken by the police," Public Order Minister Olga Gerovasili said.

"We will reinforce our democracy. This incident should give pause to those who leave a path open to terrorism and fascism."

She said the anti-terrorism police were leading the investigation. Dozens of police investigators wearing white coveralls collected evidence from the scene, much of which remained cordoned off.

The blast shattered windows and damaged the front of the building, and tore through front offices. Nearby apartment buildings and cars were also damaged.

The explosive device was attached to a metal crash barrier on a busy coastal road in the Falirou area south of Athens.

Skai continued its live TV broadcast, reporting from outside the building, while radio broadcasts from inside the

building were also operating.

Journalist Nikos Filippidis arrived for work after the building was partially reopened.

"There are people who work here for the press, to inform the public," he said. "The damage will be fixed, but this feels like violence inside someone's home."

Monday's attack bore some similarities with a Dec. 22, 2017, bombing of a courthouse building in central Athens. That attack was claimed by a far-left group called Popular Fighters Group.

Greece has a history of armed attacks over the last four decades, mostly from radical far-left groups that began to emerge after a seven-year dictatorship that collapsed in 1974.

Targets frequently include banks and embassies, as well as police and judicial sites.

Focus

Scope of investigations into Trump has shaped his presidency

AP

President Donald Trump speaks to media he visits Section 60 at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va., Saturday, Dec. 15, 2018, during Wreaths Across America Day. Wreaths Across America was started in 1992 at Arlington National Cemetery by Maine businessman Morrill Worcester and has expanded to hundreds of veterans' cemeteries and other locations in all 50 states and beyond.

By CALVIN WOODWARD and JULIE PACE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP)—Investigations now entangle Donald Trump's White House, campaign, transition, inauguration, charity and business. For Trump, the political, the personal and the deeply personal are all under examination.

Less than two years into Trump's presidency, his business associates, political advisers and family members are being probed, along with the practices of his late father. On Saturday, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke became the fourth Cabinet member to leave under an ethical cloud, having sparked 17 investigations into his actions on the job, by one watchdog's count.

All of this with the first special counsel investigation against a president in 20 years hanging over Trump's head, spinning out charges and strong-arming guilty pleas from underlings while keeping in suspense whether the president—"Individual 1" in prosecutor Robert Mueller's coded legalese—will end up accused of criminal behavior himself.

The scope of the scrutiny has shaped Trump's presidency, proving a steady distraction from his governing agenda. So far, much of it has been launched by federal prosecutors and government watchdogs that eschew partisanship. The intensity is certain to increase next year when Democrats assume control of the House and the subpoena power that comes with it.

Although Trump dismisses the investigations as politically motivated "witch hunts," his high-octane Twitter account frequently betrays just how consumed he is by the scrutiny. He's also said to watch hours of television coverage on milestone days in the investigations.

"It saps your energy, diverts your attention and you simply can't lead because your opponents are up in arms against you," Cal Jillson, a Southern Methodist University political scientist and historian, said of the scrutiny. "It weakens your friends and emboldens your enemies."

Almost midway through his term, Trump is struggling to deliver on his central campaign promises. He may end the year without a Republican-led Congress giving him the \$5 billion he wants for a border wall. And he's previewed few legislative priorities for 2019.

Even if he had, it's unlikely the new Democratic House majority would have much incen-

tive to help a president weakened by investigations rack up wins as his own re-election campaign approaches.

Perhaps not since Bill Clinton felt hounded by a "vast right wing conspiracy," as Hillary Clinton put it, has a president been under such duress from investigation.

This jeopardy has come with Trump's party in control of Congress and the Justice Department driving at least three separate criminal investigations. They are the Mueller probe looking into possible collusion, obstruction of justice or other wrongdoing in contacts between the Trump campaign and Russia; the New York campaign-finance case involving hush money paid to Trump's alleged lovers; and now a case from New York, first reported by The Wall Street Journal this past week, examining the finances and operations of Trump's inaugural committee and whether foreign interests made illegal payments to it.

Behind those matters is a battery of lawsuits or inquiries from state attorneys general and other parties tied mainly to Trump businesses.

"Let me point out that there are a lot of unanswered ethical, legal and factual questions," Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said Sunday on CNN's "State of the Union."

"But, clearly, this was not a good week for President Trump nor for his campaign organization," she said, adding that it is "critical" for Mueller to be allowed to complete his work "unimpeded, so that we can have the full picture."

At best, the investigations are overshadowing what has been positive economic news. At worst, the probes are a threat to the presidency, Trump's family and his business interests.

The deep diving will only grow in the new year when Democrats take over the House. They are expected to launch their own investigations and could pursue impeachment, though party leaders caution they could face a political backlash by taking that step.

Even if Trump avoids impeachment, the Democratic investigations will create headaches. Administration officials will be called to testify before Congress and lawmakers will seek a trove of documents, probably including Trump's tax returns, which he has refused to make public.

A bare-bones White House staff may struggle to keep up. A tally by the Brookings Institu-

tion finds more than 60 percent of Trump's top aides have left in the first two years, a turnover rate exceeding the previous five presidents. In addition, 10 Cabinet secretaries have departed, more than Barack Obama, George W. Bush and Clinton lost in two years. The shake-ups now have left Mick Mulvaney, Trump's budget chief, doing double duty indefinitely as the president's chief of staff.

That combination makes it hard to imagine a president effectively engaged in policy, even if—as in the case of Clinton—the drawn-out investigations lead to an impeachment that fails to remove the president.

"The modern presidency is extraordinarily complex and demanding so you need the president's full attention," Jillson says. "Where your attention should be, you're also thinking about meeting with your lawyers."

As the investigations mount, few Republicans have dissociated themselves publicly from Trump. But privately, some lawmakers do worry that the investigations will damage his re-election prospects and their own chances in 2020 House and Senate races.

The federal campaign finance probe has put GOP lawmakers in a particularly awkward position. Prosecutors, as well as Trump's longtime personal lawyer Michael Cohen and a tabloid company that has long been an ally, assert that Trump directed hush payments to keep women quiet about alleged affairs in the closing weeks of the 2016 campaign. Such a payment would violate campaign finance laws. Cohen was sentenced this past week to three years in prison.

Underscoring the balancing act for Republicans, outgoing Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, initially stated that he didn't much care about Trump being implicated in Cohen's crime, then thought better of his words.

"I made comments about allegations against the president that were irresponsible and a poor reflection on my lengthy record of dedication to the rule of law," Hatch said in a statement Friday.

Five people in Trump's orbit have pleaded guilty to charges in the continuing Mueller probe. Among them, Paul Manafort and Rick Gates were Nos. 1 and 2, respectively, for a time in Trump's presidential campaign. George Papadopoulos, a lower-level campaign adviser, was sentenced to 14 days in prison and is out. The others are Michael Flynn, who was

Trump's first national security adviser in office and is to be sentenced Tuesday, and Cohen, who is expected to begin his sentence in March.

In addition, the special counsel's office says Flynn, in giving 19 interviews and turning over a mountain of documents, has assisted in a criminal investigation that has yet to be revealed.

In other words, there's no end in sight.

Trump is also exposed to legal peril beyond that from federal prosecutors. Among the lawsuits or investigations:

■ Democratic attorneys general in Maryland and the District of Columbia and congressional Democrats are challenging the Trump Organization's business transactions with foreign and state government interests, such as those at his Washington hotel, citing the constitutional ban on presidents taking payments from such sources without congressional consent.

■ Summer Zervos, once a contestant on Trump's TV show, has sued Trump for defamation for accusing her of lying. She alleged in 2016 that he made unwelcome physical contact with her. He's failed several times to derail the case.

■ New York tax officials are looking into whether Trump or his charitable foundation misrepresented tax liability. In addition, the New York tax department said it is "vigorously pursuing all appropriate avenues of investigation" after a New York Times report found Trump and his family, going back to transactions by his father, Fred Trump, cheated on taxes for decades. The report said Trump received the equivalent today of at least \$413 million from his father, much of it through dubious tax maneuvers. Trump called the report "a very old, boring and often told hit piece on me."

■ New York authorities allege in a lawsuit that Trump illegally tapped his charitable Trump Foundation to settle legal disputes, help his campaign for president and cover personal and business expenses, including the purchase of a life-size portrait of himself for \$10,000.

Stanley Renshon, political scientist at the City University of New York and a psychoanalyst, says all of that adds up to a lot of people, not just the left, "trying to make his presidency untenable."

It is, perhaps, vaster than the right-wing "conspiracy" the Clintons endured, Renshon says. "I call it the everybody conspiracy."

Overdrive

By PHOEBE WALL HOWARD
DETROIT FREE PRESS

The new Ford Ranger isn't trying to compete with the Toyota Prius on gas mileage, but Ford is touting new midsize pickup for its fuel efficiency.

Powered by a standard 2.3-liter turbocharged four-cylinder engine, the Ranger has an EPA-estimated fuel economy rating of 21 mpg in the city, 26 on the highway and 23 combined for its two-wheel drive truck. The ratings top the EPA estimates for less powerful four-cylinder competitors including the Chevrolet Colorado and Toyota Tacoma.

Four-wheel drive Rangers rated 20 mpg city, 24 highway and 22 mpg combined.

"This is best-in-class EPA-estimated city fuel economy rating of any gasoline-powered four-wheel-drive midsize pickup," Ford said.

While Ford touts the strength of the Ranger, the Dearborn-based carmaker will have trouble winning back shoppers who were abandoned by the company when the popular truck was discontinued in North America.

"The Toyota Tacoma is certainly Ranger's No. 1 target," said Ivan Drury, senior analyst at Edmunds. "When Ranger left the market, they left a huge gap. Tacoma filled that niche very well. Un-

All-new Ford Ranger touts combined fuel economy of 23 mpg

fortunately for Ford, it gave up share to a loyal consumer base, and that's Toyota buyers. To regain share from them is extremely difficult."

He said fuel economy is all comparable in the midsize pickup segment and Ranger doesn't appear to be breaking any new ground.

Stephanie Brinley, principal analyst at IHS Markit, agreed that decent mileage in a certain range is assumed these days.

"The two primary competitors for Ranger are the Chevy Colorado and Toyota Tacoma," she said. "This all falls in the fuel economy range a consumer will expect for a midsize truck. If fuel economy is perceived to be bad or off pace, it can be a detractor; but if fuel economy is within range of expectations, other vehicle attributes can be more important. People don't buy just on fuel economy, and with different engines, comparison isn't always apples to apples. The mpg Ford has announced is competitive."

The standard 2.3-liter EcoBoost engine produces 310 pound-feet of torque, delivering the most torque of any gas engine in the midsize pickup segment, Ford said.

The Ranger is being built at the Michigan Assembly Plant and arrives at dealerships in January.

TNS
An all-new Ford Ranger midsize pickup truck returns to the U.S. market for 2019.



UNDER THE HOOD:

Does flashing D light indicate transmission trouble?

Q: I bought my friend's one-owner, well-maintained 2005 Honda Pilot with 138,000 miles on it. It runs really nicely, but while I was driving it recently the Drive (D) transmission indicator light started flashing. I pulled over and found the trans fluid to be full, clean and smelling fine.

The flashing D light went out soon after and hasn't come back on, but the trans hesitates on the first drive of the day and has kind of a "soft neutral" occasionally when going around corners. My cheap code reader didn't show anything, but I'm concerned nonetheless. I know you are busy and haven't

seen/diagnosed the vehicle, but I would like to ask you two questions. Is a flashing D light a sure sign of impending transmission failure? Do Pilots have transmission issues? I don't want to invest \$3,000 more in my \$5,000 car.

—Tim

A: This sounds like a nice vehicle. Hopefully, the issue will be minor. On Honda vehicles, a flashing D4 shift indicator lamp indicates a fault has been recognized by the powertrain control module related to the transmission. The reason your OBD-II code reader didn't retrieve a DTC (diagnostic trouble code) is likely that this fault wasn't considered to be emissions re-

lated and you didn't see an accompanying "check engine" light. Many/most transmission faults do fall into this category, and are indicated by an illuminated check engine light and a P07** series DTC, with or without an accompanying flashing D4 light.

Most recognized faults refer to a faulty solenoid (electric valve that meters fluid), sensor (provides shaft speed, pressure or other information), circuit wiring fault, or a hard fault such as slipping clutch, clogged strainer or orifice, or binding mechanism. In cases where a DTC isn't present, a symptom troubleshooting index is followed to diagnose the fault.

Having the Pilot checked by a qualified tech, using a pro-grade scan tool, is key to getting this resolved. If you'd like to take a crack at reading transmission codes prior to this, it's possible to read them from the D4 light, after placing the system into SCS mode, by grounding terminal nine of the DLC (data link connector used by scan tools) with the ignition switch in the key on/engine off position. Terminal nine is the bottom row/left side terminal (consult a DLC terminal image to be certain of what you see). Gently insert a T-pin, connect via a wire to body ground. DTCs will be flashed by the D4 light. These differ from the

By BRAD BERGHOLDT
Tribune News Service

Brad Bergholdt is an automotive technology instructor at Evergreen Valley College in San Jose, Calif. Readers may send him email at bradbergholdt@gmail.com; he cannot make personal replies.



OBD-II DTC format; codes 1 through 9 will be that many flashes. Codes 10 and above will be a long flash for tens, then short flashes for ones and twos and so-on. Example of a code 26: two long flashes followed by six short ones.

A search of the web will bring up folks complaining about the Honda BVLA five-speed automatic transmission used in your Pilot, which is certainly better than

the BVGA unit used during the previous couple of years. My Honda transmission guru, Roland Dickason, owner of H&A transmissions, a leading Honda/Acura transmissions remanufacturer, says this model transmission isn't a big seller! He expressed optimism a scan tool check might uncover a minor issue such as sticking solenoid. I'd get moving on this right away to lessen the chance of causing damage.

Life & Style

Philippines contestant **Catriona Gray** named Miss Universe

By **KAWEEWIT KAEWJINDA**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BANGKOK (AP)—The Philippines' Catriona Gray was named Miss Universe 2018 in a competition concluding Monday in Bangkok, besting contestants from 93 other countries and delighting her home country.

The 24-year-old Gray wore a sparkling red dress she said is inspired by a volcano in the Philippines as she was handed the crown to the delight of a roaring crowd that generally favored Southeast Asian contestants.

She said she wore red because "when I was 13 my mom said she had a dream that I would win Miss Universe in a red dress." She said her mom cried when they saw each other after she won the competition.

Gray edged out first runner-up Tamaryn Green of South Africa and third-place Sthefany Gutierrez of Venezuela. She succeeds Demi-Leigh Nel-Peters of South Africa.

In the Philippines, pageants are a popular attraction, and Gray's countrymen cheered wildly and jumped for joy when she was declared the winner. Celebrations were especially buoyant in Oas town in the northeastern province of Albay, from which Gray's Filipina mother hails.

The office of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte was quick to congratulate the winner. Gray is the fourth Filipina to be named Miss Universe.

"Ms. Gray truly made the entire Philippines proud when she sashayed on the global stage and showcased the genuine qualities defining a Filipina beauty: confidence, grace, intelligence and strength in the face of tough challenges," he said in a statement from the presidential palace. "In her success, Miss Philippines has shown to the world that women in our country have the ability to turn dreams into reality through passion, diligence, determination and hard work."

An early round of questioning touched on the issue of drugs, where Duterte's aggressive 'war on drugs' has taken thousands of lives, many in what



AP
Catriona Gray of the Philippines waves to the audience after being crowned the new Miss Universe 2018 during the final round of the 67th Miss Universe competition in Bangkok, Thailand, Monday, Dec. 17, 2018.

critics charge were extrajudicial executions. Duterte raised even more controversy when he recently joked that he smoked marijuana to deal with the busy schedule of meetings with other Asian leaders at a regional summit.

Asked what she thought about legalizing marijuana, Gray said: "I'm for it being used for medical use, but not so for recreational use. Because I think if people will argue, then what about alcohol and cigarettes? Everything is good but in moderation."

This year's Miss Universe competition included the first-ever transgender contestant, Miss Spain Angela Ponce. She said in a video presentation that it was not important for her to win but was more important for her "to be here."

One of the few controversies of this year's contest involved Miss United States Sarah Rose Summers seeming to mock contestants from Cambodia and Vietnam over their English language skills. Summers apologized.

The finale was again hosted by Steve Harvey who famously announced the wrong winner in the 2015 contest. Harvey joked briefly about the incident in exchanges with contestants and said "You all can't let that go" and "I'm still here."

The theme of the 67th Miss Universe pageant was "Empowered Women" and was judged by seven women including former pageant winners, businesswomen, and a fashion designer.

The contestants spent nearly a month in Thailand to compete in preliminary rounds wearing elaborate national costumes, visit famous tourist sites and even met the country's prime minister.

NEW YORK (AP)—Racial justice. Obstruction of justice. Social justice. The Justice Department. Merriam-Webster has chosen "justice" as its 2018 word of the year, driven by the churning news cycle over months and months.

The word follows "toxic," picked by Oxford Dictionaries, and "misinformation," plucked by Dictionary.com.

Peter Sokolowski, Merriam-Webster's editor at large, told The Associated Press ahead of Monday's announcement that "justice" consistently bubbled into the top 20 or 30 lookups on the company's website, spiking at times due to specific events but also skating close to the surface for much of the year.

While it's one of those common words people likely know how to spell and use correctly in a sentence, Sokolowski pointed to other rea-

Top of mind: 'Justice' is Merriam-Webster's word of the year

sons that drive search traffic. Among them is an attempt to focus a train of thought around a philosophical problem, or to seek aspirational motivation. Such well-known words are often among the most looked up every year, including those that are slightly abstract, including "love," he said.

The designation for "justice" came soon after President Trump's one-time fixer, Michael Cohen, was sentenced to three years in prison for crimes that included arranging the payment of hush money to conceal his boss' alleged sexual affairs. He told a judge he agreed time and again to cover up Trump's "dirty deeds" out of "blind loyalty."

It also came ahead of a Senate vote on the "First Step Act," a criminal justice reform bill with broad bipar-

tisan support. Earlier in the year, Kim Kardashian West not once but twice paid a White House visit on Trump to discuss prison and sentencing reform. Sentencing for drug crimes, treatment for opioid addiction, a loosening of cannabis laws, a Tesla probe, the Mueller investigation into the Trump campaign: Justice will remain top of mind into the new year.

"These are stories that connect to the culture and to society across races, across classes," Sokolowski said. "We get this word that filters in."

That includes Twitter in a big way.

Often, when Trump tweets about the Department of Justice, he uses simply "Justice." On Aug. 1, when he tweeted his wish for then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions to stop the

Mueller investigation, searches spiked significantly. Trump referred to "obstruction of justice," a separate entry on the Merriam-Webster site, prompting a lookup increase of 900 percent over the same date the year before.

Searches for "justice" throughout the year, when compared to 2017, were up 74 percent on the site that has more than 100 million page views a month and nearly half a million entries, Sokolowski said. To be word of the year worthy, an entry has to show both a high volume of traffic and a significant year-over-year increase in lookups—as opposed to, say, a word that merely buzzed or felt lofty, he said.

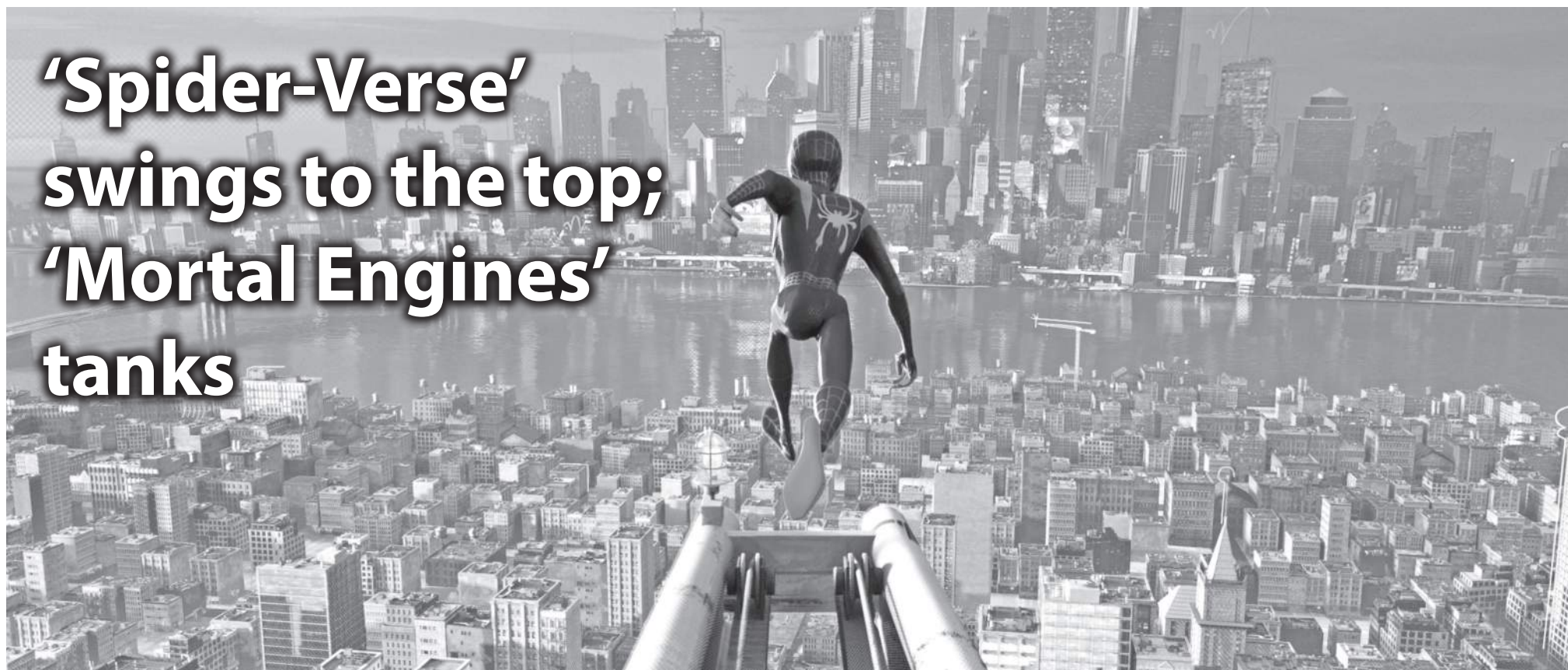
"We are not editorializing. We looked at our data and we were ourselves surprised by this word," Sokolowski said.

"This is a word that people have been thinking about for this entire year."

The word "justice" comes from Latin, unlike a lot of the more emotional words that rose in Old English. Old English did have "law," "fair" and "right," but never "justice," in reference to a system of laws.

"It's not a coincidence that it comes from the 12th century, which immediately follows the Norman conquest. When the Normans invaded England they brought their language, Old French, which was basically the then-modern version of Latin. They brought their system of government and laws and imposed them on the people they conquered, and that's why all of the legal language in English today is Latin, just like the word justice," Sokolowski explained. "It took the imposition of a system of laws to bring us the word justice."

'Spider-Verse' swings to the top; 'Mortal Engines' tanks



This image released by Sony Pictures Animations shows a scene from "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse."

AP

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse" swung to the top of the domestic box office in its first weekend in theaters, proving that there is widespread audience interest in big screen animated versions of Marvel's marquee superheroes.

The film led a host of newcomers that debuted to varying success on this pre-Christmas holiday weekend, including Clint Eastwood's drug smuggling drama "The Mule" and the Peter Jackson-produced epic "Mortal Engines" which bombed in North American theaters.

"Into the Spider-Verse" earned an estimated \$35.4

million from 3,813 theaters against a \$90 million production budget according to Sony Pictures on Sunday, which is a record for animated movies in December (although the hybrid "Alvin and the Chipmunks" movies were higher). The film features an innovative animation style—both CGI and hand-drawn—and focuses on the Miles Morales character as he learns to become the famed web-slinger. It's another financial win for the studio's latest "expanded Spider-Man universe" strategy following "Venom" and "Spider-Man: Homecoming."

And "Spider-Verse" has

been very well-received among critics, and audiences in exit surveys gave it a rare A+ CinemaScore—a first for a Spider-Man film. It's also been nominated for a Golden Globe award for best animated feature and picked up a few honors from critics' groups as well, including the New York Film Critics Circle.

"We are playing to both families and fanboys. We're an all-audience film," said Adrian Smith, Sony's president of domestic distribution.

They also have an eight-day runway until the big Christmas release start packing the multiplexes.

The Clint Eastwood-directed drug smuggling drama "The Mule" debuted in second place with an estimated \$17.2 million. It's a solid debut for R-rated film that cost \$50 million to produce. The Warner Bros. film drew an audience that was mostly older (78 percent over 35-years-old) and male (54 percent).

"Clint Eastwood has such a big following as a director and a star," said Jeff Goldstein, Warner Bros. president of domestic distribution.

It's Eastwood's first major role in a film since 2012, and the studio is optimistic about the film's longevity into the holiday.

Not all the new films were

so lucky, however. Coming in fifth behind holdovers "Dr. Seuss' The Grinch" and "Ralph Breaks the Internet," was the Peter Jackson-produced epic "Mortal Engines," which bombed in North American theaters, taking in only \$7.5 million in ticket sales against a reported \$100 million production budget. MRC and Universal Pictures produced the post-apocalyptic steampunk film based on the popular Philip Reeve book, which is the first of four in a series.

Neither critics nor audiences responded favorably to the Christian Rivers-directed film, however, which has a deathly 28 percent on Rotten Tomatoes.

This weekend also saw the release of the PG-13 rated version of "Deadpool 2," "Once Upon A Deadpool," in 1,566 locations. It earned an estimated \$2.6 million, which is being added to "Deadpool 2's" box office totals.

In limited release, Barry Jenkins' James Baldwin adaptation "If Beale Street Could Talk" opened in four theaters to a very strong \$219,173. Jenkins' follow-up to "Moonlight" is expected to be a big player throughout awards season and expands nationwide in the coming weeks.

Historically, this mid-December, pre-Christmas weekend has not been a big one for

movie openings, save for the exception of last year when "Star Wars: The Last Jedi" opened to \$220 million, which is why the weekend overall is down some 61 percent from last year and why the year-to-date advantage has fallen slightly to 8.5 percent.

But the industry is still on track for a record year at the box office and has several late-game blockbusters on the way including "Aquaman," "Bumblebee" and "Mary Poppins Returns."

"Aquaman" doesn't hit North American theaters until Friday but the big budget DC superhero movie is already a blockbuster internationally. In its second weekend in theaters abroad, the film has already earned \$261.3 million.

"It's the happiest time of the year for Hollywood. This is when you get that big burst at the end, a lot of people catching up on movies," said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. "It's about momentum and this momentum should carry into next year."

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore. Where available, the latest international numbers for Friday through Sunday are also included. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

Lawsuit claims Weinstein assaulted woman, bragged he slept with Jennifer Lawrence

By **NANCY DILLON**
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

NEW YORK—A new lawsuit claims Harvey Weinstein sexually assaulted an aspiring actress during the Sundance Film Festival in 2013 and later bragged about sleeping with actress Jennifer Lawrence.

"Do you even want to be an actress?" Weinstein at one point asked the woman—identified in court papers as Jane Doe—as he complained about how "difficult" and "stupid" she was being, her lawsuit alleges.

"I slept with Jennifer Lawrence and look where she is. She has just won an Oscar," Weinstein allegedly said.

Lawrence has previously stated she was not "victimized personally" by Weinstein but wanted to "kill him" when she heard the allegations from dozens of other women.

The lawsuit, filed Friday in Los Angeles, accuses the pariah producer and his former studio, The Weinstein Company, of assault, sexual battery, retaliation, discrimi-

nation and gender violence.

The woman claims she first met Weinstein at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2013 and accepted an invitation to visit him in his suite at the Waldorf Astoria Park City to discuss a possible film role.

According to the complaint, the woman excused herself to use the restroom about two hours into the meeting and was "immobilized" with "embarrassment" when Weinstein barged into the bathroom while she was sitting on the toilet with her thighs around her ankles.

"Weinstein unbuttoned his jeans, dropped his pants to the floor and exposed his penis while telling her, 'I like looking at you,'" the paper-work obtained by the New York Daily News states.

"My d--- is nice and hard for you," Weinstein allegedly told the woman, according to the complaint. "Do you like my d---?"

The plaintiff says she rebuffed Weinstein's advances. She claims he began masturbating and "eventually ejacu-

lated directly onto her skirt."

Weinstein allegedly instructed the woman to remain his friend if she wanted a career in the film industry, the lawsuit states.

The woman says she reported details of the incident to her agent and was warned not to upset the powerful industry gatekeeper.

The next day, Weinstein invited the woman to an expensive restaurant, and she went "despite her fear" due to the potential harm Weinstein could inflict on her career if she upset him, the lawsuit states.

She says later during the festival, Weinstein followed her to yet another bathroom, "grabbed her tight" and thrust her hand onto his penis.

The aspiring actress claims that at a later date back in New York, Weinstein invited her to more meetings with the promise of potential work.

"Weinstein persisted and told her that he was in love with her. Sometimes Weinstein would get irritated and angered by her rejections (and) repeatedly remind her

that if they were no longer 'friends,' he would harm or destroy her career," the lawsuit claims.

She says after a dinner at Tribeca Grill that she attended to discuss a possible role in the film "Vampire Academy," Weinstein lured her to his office with the promise of giving her a script and ambushed her.

The woman claims Weinstein began groping her, pushed her down and performed oral sex on her against her wishes as she was "audibly sobbing."

That's when Weinstein brought up having slept with Lawrence, the suit says.

Attempts to reach a spokesman for Weinstein were not immediately successful Friday.

Weinstein, 66, has pleaded not guilty to criminal charges in Manhattan related to alleged assaults on other women.

He's also under criminal investigation in Los Angeles County after women reported incidents to authorities in Los Angeles and Beverly Hills.

1. **"Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse,"** \$35.4 million (\$21 million international).
2. **"The Mule,"** \$17.2 million.
3. **"Dr. Seuss' The Grinch,"** \$11.6 million (\$23.3 million international).
4. **"Ralph Breaks the Internet,"** \$9.6 million (\$7.9 million international).
5. **"Mortal Engines,"** \$7.5 million (\$11.5 million international).
6. **"Creed II,"** \$5.4 million (\$2.3 million international).
7. **"Bohemian Rhapsody,"** \$4.1 million (\$20 million international).
8. **"Instant Family,"** \$3.7 million (\$738,000 international).
9. **"Fantastic Beasts: Crimes of Grindelwald,"** \$3.7 million (\$11.8 million international).
10. **"Green Book,"** \$2.8 million.

Kids at a Vatican charity give Pope Francis a birthday cake

Offset interruption of Cardi B at Rolling Loud spurs outrage

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Cardi B is asking the public to not bash Offset, who became the target of internet outrage after he interrupted her set at the Rolling Loud Festival in Los Angeles Saturday night and asked her to get back together with him.

Cardi B on Sunday said in an Instagram video that she wishes people wouldn't bash the father of her daughter.

The festival's co-founder Tariq Cherif said in a statement Sunday that the festival had nothing to do with Offset's appearance and that headliners and their teams have full control of the stage and who is allowed on it.

The couple broke up in early December after little more than a year of marriage. They got married in September 2017 and welcomed a baby girl in July.



AP
Pope Francis blows a candle atop of a cake he was offered on the eve of his 82nd birthday during audience with children and family from the dispensary of Santa Marta, a Vatican charity that offers special help to mothers and children in need, in the Paul VI hall at the Vatican, Sunday, Dec. 16, 2018.

life and people.

Francis said: "The proud, the arrogant, can't understand life because they're incapable of lowering themselves."

As if to make his point, Francis declined to sit on an upholstered chair, opting to perch on the Vatican auditorium's stage steps.

The charity dispensary, with the help of doctors, nurses and other volunteers, assists some 400 children, many of them from immigrant families, and their mothers.

'SNL' gets fresh round of Trump wrath after Christmas skit

LOS ANGELES (AP) — President Donald Trump is criticizing "Saturday Night Live" on Twitter again the morning after a Christmas-themed spoof on the sketch-comedy show focused on him.



Trump

Trump on Sunday called "SNL" and NBC "democratic spin machines."

On Saturday night, "SNL" opened with an "It's a Wonderful Life" themed sketch that imagined a White House without

Trump. Alec Baldwin returned to play the president once again.

Trump has often been critical of "SNL" and Baldwin's portrayal of him, and has taken to Twitter in the past to express his frustrations, even getting into spats with Baldwin.

In his tweet Sunday, Trump wrote that coverage on networks like NBC is one-sided and suggested that it should be tested in courts.

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Children who frequent a Vatican pediatric dispensary have given Pope Francis a birthday cake, a day before he turns 82.

Francis joked with them Sunday, saying he hoped "such a big cake doesn't give indigestion" and blew out a candle atop the treat decorated

in the Vatican's yellow-and-white official colors.

He said children are good at teaching grown-ups to be humble, to better understand

Historian lays out vision for new Holocaust museum in Warsaw

WARSAW, Poland (AP)—The Warsaw Ghetto Museum should be an ambitious state-of-the-art facility — "the major Holocaust museum in Poland"—when it opens in 2023, its newly appointed chief historian said Friday.

The Polish government announced plans in March to create a museum dedicated to the Jews who were imprisoned in

the Warsaw ghetto and then tortured and murdered by German forces during their World War II-era occupation of Poland.

But Daniel Blatman, a Holocaust historian at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, described a mission for the museum that is much broader and more ambitious.

"What I would like to achieve is a wide perspective of Jewish life and death during the Nazi occupation through the perspective of the history of the Warsaw ghetto," Blatman said, describing plans to address the experiences of Jews elsewhere in Poland, including in the many other ghettos created by the occupying Germans.

"I want this to be the major Holocaust museum in Poland," Blatman said.

He presented his vision at

a news conference in Warsaw and in a separate interview with The Associated Press.

Blatman noted that while Poland has many authentic World War II memorial sites, like Auschwitz and other former Nazi death camps, and a major museum in Warsaw dedicated to the 1,000-year presence of Jews in Polish lands, it actually has no major museum dedicated only to the Holocaust.

Polish Jews numbered about 3.3 million on the eve of the Holocaust and most were murdered. While much can be learned at Auschwitz, with exhibitions housed in old barracks and the remains of structures where human beings were gassed and burned, that death camp was used mainly to kill Jews transported from elsewhere in Europe.

Poland's Jews—who made

up 10 percent of Poland's population—were mostly killed in other death camps, including Treblinka, Belzec and Sobibor, Blatman said.

One guiding principle of the new museum will be to portray the fate of Poland's Jews as part of both Jewish history and Polish history.

"Polish Jews who perished during the Holocaust perished as Polish citizens of Jewish origin. And I believe that the right way to present the history of that in Warsaw is to find ways to integrate it into the overall picture of this city under Nazi occupation," he said at the news conference. "There was a wall separating Jews and Poles during the Holocaust but that wall was created neither by Jews nor by Poles. It was created by the Germans."

Disney actor Stoney Westmoreland fired after arrest

NEW YORK (AP)—Disney Channel actor Stoney Westmoreland has been fired after he was arrested in Salt Lake City for allegedly attempting to have a sexual relationship with an online acquaintance he believed was 13 years old.

In a statement Saturday, Disney announced that the 48-year-old Westmoreland

had been dropped from the sitcom "Andi Mack," on which he plays the grandfather of the teen-age title character. The show films in Utah.

Salt Lake police detective Greg Wilking told The Associated Press that Westmoreland was on his way to what he believed would be a sexual encounter when

he was arrested Friday and charged with enticing a minor and sending inappropriate materials, including nude images. A message left with Westmoreland's agent, Mitchell Stubbs, was not immediately returned.

Westmoreland's other acting credits include "Scandal" and "Breaking Bad."

Reconnection with teacher is highlight of reunion plans

DEAR ABBY: I'm a woman in my 50s and will be going to my high school reunion in a few months. I recently reconnected with one of my high school teachers, whom I greatly admired. (OK, I'll admit I had a schoolgirl crush on him.)

He is 10 years older, and we had a friendly relationship "back in the day" with extracurricular school activities (he was a sponsor) and even some outside socializing (dances and such), though there were no lines crossed as far as impropriety. We were both engaged to other people (who both happened to live a good distance away) at the time, so there was no thought of a romantic relationship.

Fast-forward 40-odd years. We are both single (I'm divorced; he never married). We have been emailing back and forth for a couple of months and making plans to get together at the reunion—maybe before. We have discussed a lot of things, but he never mentions dating or his former fiancée, so I sometimes wonder if he might be gay.

I have two questions: (1) Would it still be crossing a line if we started a romantic relationship because I was once his student? (He's long retired.) (2) How do you ask a man or find out if he's gay before you embarrass yourself by trying to start a romance?

TORN IN THE SOUTH

DEAR TORN: It would not be crossing a line if you and your

former teacher were to start a romantic relationship at this point in your lives. However, before you embark on that campaign, it is important that you understand why he has been single all these years. A way to do that without embarrassing yourself would be to pay him a compliment by saying, "Why is it that such a great guy like you has never married?" Then listen.

DEAR ABBY: Have you ever heard the saying, "A daughter is a daughter all of her life, but a son is a son 'til he takes a wife"? Our son and his family have never spent a single Christmas Eve or Christmas Day with us during the entire 17 years they have been married. A Thanksgiving with them is very rare.

They live an hour away. We and his in-laws live in the same small town, but they spend every holiday at the in-laws'. Their children have no memories of us on the holidays. When I talked about it with our friends, they said they have the same problem. All of their sons go to their daughter-in-laws' parents', too.

With the holidays coming up, I hope you may have something to say about this. When we spoke to our son about it, it just caused bad feelings.

SAME PROBLEM IN MINNESOTA

DEAR PROBLEM: My heart goes out to you and other parents who experience this. However, there is nothing I can do to change the behavior of adult children, as regretta-

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

ble as it may be. The best advice I can offer is for you—and your friends—to spend the holidays doing things that you enjoy. Take a trip, gather with these friends and celebrate. It would be a lot healthier than sitting around brooding about something none of you can control.

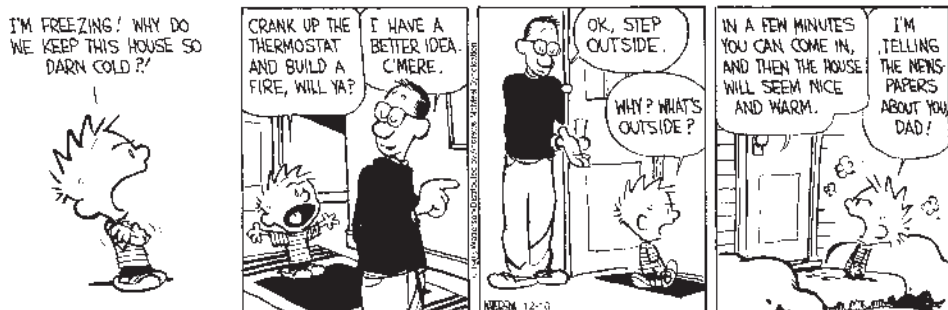
P.S. It's regrettable that although you live in the same community as the in-laws, you have not been asked to join them for a holiday meal at their table. After all, marriage is supposed to unite families, not divide them.

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis



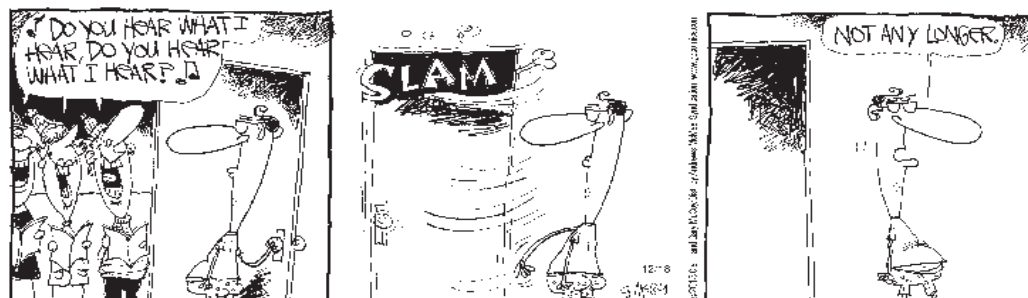
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS			
1 Lighten	37 Asian	3 Six, in	23 Against
5 Series of	38 Royal	4 Being	24 Rhythm
8 Saxo-	41 Wet dirt	5 Wee	26 Bergman/
phone	42 New York	6 Football	Boyer
range	43 Snafus	7 Actress	27 Wax-
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Solution time: 22 mins.

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I	R	A	F	T	S	C	O	R	F	
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N	E	W	B	I	T	E	S	P	O	P

Yesterday's answer 12-18

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14		
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42				43	44			45	46	47
48				49				50		
51				52				53		

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Christina Aguilera, 38; Katie Holmes, 40; Brad Pitt, 55; Steven Spielberg, 72.

Happy Birthday: Preparation will be mandatory if you want to make domestic changes this year. Don't fear doing so; just do it the right way. There are no shortcuts, so buckle down, go above and beyond and make this a year to remember. Think big, but enforce moderation and practicality. The result will go far beyond your expectations. Your numbers are 9, 15, 21, 27, 32, 36, 42.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Walk away from controversy and criticism. As long as you are doing your best, you should have no regrets. Change begins within and happens because you believe you need to make some adjustments to fulfill your dreams. Don't make unrealistic purchases. ★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Touch base with old friends or relatives and sort out what you want to do between now and the end of the year. You'll feel much better once you have collaborated and know exactly what everyone around you is doing. ★★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Extravagance, indulgent behavior and saying things you may regret should all be considered before you rise and shine. Feeling invincible will get you into trouble. Rethink your day and put an end to temptation and taking extreme measures. ★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Offer help to those in need. Volunteering at a soup kitchen or making a donation that will

bring someone joy will encourage others to follow suit and do so as well. Be a leader and good things will happen. ★★★★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You'll be in the mood to make some personal changes and to have some fun. Before you jump into the fast lane, put on the brakes and consider who will be affected by the choices you make. Emotional matters will escalate. ★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Do what's right, not what's easiest to do. How you handle situations will make a difference in the way others view you. You will learn from those you encounter and form a friendship if you put morals, integrity and honesty first. ★★★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Make special plans with someone you love. A sudden or unexpected change will help you realize what and who is important to you. Speak up and help those who could use a kind word and helping hand. ★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Updating your image will give you the boost you need moving forward. Love and romance are on the rise, and special plans should be made with someone you enjoy spending time with. Share your thoughts and feelings. ★★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Last-minute arrangements can be put into play. How you fix up your surroundings for company or the physical changes you make to add a little pizzazz to your appearance will feel good. Don't share personal secrets. ★★★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): A change at home will be impressive and help set the mood for the rest of the week. Offer love, kindness and understanding along with hands-on help to make a difference to those you care about the most. ★★★★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Tidy up loose ends and look at how best to move forward professionally. A new year is fast approaching, and having a game plan ready to present will give you something to look forward to. Don't let anyone discourage you. ★★

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Look at your lifestyle and the people you associate with and consider whether you should make some changes. An honest assessment will help you get back on track and please those who care about you the most. Romance is highlighted. ★★★★★

Birthday Baby: You are adaptable, entertaining and demonstrative. You are imaginative and passionate.

To submit astrological questions to the "Dear Eugenia" column, visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

			7	3						
	1	4				3	8			
	9		1	6		4				
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	4		6		9		5			
	6	7				4	9			
			4	5						

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

4	9	1	7	5	8	3	2	6
5	7	2	6	3	9	4	8	1
6	3	8	1	2	4	7	9	5
9	2	5	4	7	3	6	1	8
3	8	7	2	1	6	5	4	9
1	4	6	8	9	5	2	3	7
7	6	9	3	4	1	8	5	2
2	1	3	5	8	7	9	6	4
8	5	4	9	6	2	1	7	3

Difficulty Level ★★

12/18

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

BOSTON RED SOX — WORLD SERIES CHAMPS Sol.: 10 letters

F	E	T	E	M	A	G	R	U	B	N	R	O	H	T
T	S	S	A	P	O	R	C	E	L	L	O	N	T	W
H	E	H	B	Y	C	P	O	Y	N	E	R	O	S	O
G	N	E	E	O	L	H	W	P	R	I	C	E	T	R
I	R	P	C	R	G	O	A	B	A	S	L	P	T	K
R	A	H	R	N	N	A	R	V	I	Y	W	E	E	M
W	B	E	A	O	P	A	E	D	I	A	R	D	B	A
V	R	R	E	E	D	L	N	R	L	S	E	R	R	N
A	E	D	P	L	A	E	S	D	T	V	Y	O	A	O
Z	W	A	E	Z	T	A	E	W	E	S	E	I	S	S
Q	E	Y	Q	N	L	N	R	I	Z	S	A	I	N	
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Z	E	U	G	I	R	D	O	R	K	R	E	R	U	J
B	M	A	R	T	I	N	E	Z	T	L	O	H	T	N

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12/18

Barnes, Bases, Benintendi, Betts, Bogaerts, Bradley, Brasier, Brewer, Chavis, Devers, Game, Hembree, Hernandez, Holt, Johnson, Leon, Lin, Martinez, Moreland, Nunez, Pearce, Pedrola, Porcello, Poyner, Price, Reyes, Rodriguez, Sale, Scott, Shepherd, Swihart, Taylor, Thornburg, Travis, Vazquez, Velazquez, Walden, Workman, Wright

Yesterday's Answer: Launching

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Email: matt@gregoryfirm.com

Attorney for Petitioner Pamela C. Sablan

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN
MARIANA ISLANDS**

**IN THE MATTER OF
THE APPOINTMENT
OF GUARDIANSHIP
OF MINOR CHILD,
MARIA DANIELLA
CAMACHO SABLAN,**

Minor Child,
by

**NICOLE CAMACHO
SABLAN AND
CHRISTOPHER
ROBERTO SABLAN,**

Petitioners.

**FCD-GU CIVIL ACTION
NO. 18-0410**

**NOTICE OF HEARING
ON PETITION FOR
APPOINTMENT OF
GENERAL GUARDIANSHIP**

TO: ALL INTERESTED PERSONS

NOTICE is hereby given that Nicole Camacho Sablan and Christopher Roberto Sablan have filed a petition for the legal guardianship of the Minor Child in the Commonwealth Superior Court. The original petition is available for review at the Office of the Clerk of Court at Guma Husticia, Susupe, Saipan, CNMI, and at the Law Office of Matthew T. Gregory, LLC, Suite 603, Marianas Business Plaza, Susupe, Saipan, CNMI.

A hearing on the above-captioned matter will be held on January 7, 2019, at 9:00 A.M. at the Commonwealth Superior Court, Susupe, Saipan, CNMI.

Dated: November 16, 2018.

PATRICK V. DIAZ
Clerk of Court

/s/ By: Deputy Clerk of Court

WHATZIT Solution: Olympic Games

RATES AND POLICIES

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• 3-Liner	\$15
• 5-Liner	\$24

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Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

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Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

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Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

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Steelers stand up to Brady, Patriots



PITTSBURGH (AP)—Rookie running back Jaylen Samuels, making his second start in place of injured James Conner, ran for a career-high 142 yards and made a critical third-down reception in the fourth quarter as Pittsburgh snapped a three-game losing streak by holding off the New England 17-10 on Sunday.

Ben Roethlisberger threw for 235 yards with two first-half touchdowns and two interceptions as the Steelers (8-5-1) remained in front of Baltimore in the AFC North with two weeks to go in the season. Chris Boswell, who has struggled so badly this season the team held open tryouts during the week, atoned for a 32-yard miss in the third quarter by drilling a 48-yarder with 2:30 remaining.

Pittsburgh's defense, which let fourth-quarter leads slip away each of the last two games, made it stand. The Patriots (9-5) missed a chance to clinch their 10th straight AFC East title when Tom Brady's pass into the end zone for Julian Edelman was knocked down by Pittsburgh's Morgan Burnett.

Bears 24, Packers 17

In Chicago, Mitchell Trubisky threw for two touchdowns, Eddie Jackson ended Aaron Rodgers' NFL-record streak without an interception and the Chicago Bears clinched the NFC North with a victory over the Green Bay Packers.

The Bears (10-4) secured their first playoff appearance since the 2010 team won the division, and clinching with a rare victory over their heated rivals made it all the more sweet.

The loss, coupled with Minnesota's 41-17 victory over Miami, keeps the Packers out of the postseason for the second year in a row.

Colts 23, Cowboys 0

In Indianapolis, Marlon Mack rushed for a career-high 139 yards and two scores and the Colts shut out one of the league's hottest offenses. The Colts (8-6) stayed in the AFC playoff hunt with their seventh win in eight games and their first shutout since a 27-0 victory over Cincinnati on Oct. 19, 2014.

Dallas (8-6) failed to clinch the NFC East as its five-game winning streak ended.

Mack starred in Sunday's big show. He set the tone by running through a tackle for a 19-yard gain on his first carry, wound up carrying 22 times and matching a career high with the two scoring runs—all against the league's No. 3 rushing defense.



Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger (7) gets off a pass while being tackled by New England Patriots middle linebacker Kyle Van Noy during the second half of an NFL football game in Pittsburgh, Sunday, Dec. 16, 2018.

Vikings 41, Dolphins 18

In Minneapolis, Dalvin Cook had a career-high 136 yards and two touchdowns on a season-high 19 carries as the Vikings recommitted themselves to running the ball.

Latavius Murray added 68 rushing yards and a score on 15 of the team's season-high 40 attempts. The Vikings (7-6-1) converted each of their first three drives under interim offensive coordinator Kevin Stefanski into touchdowns before turning the game over to the defense.

Anthony Barr and Danielle Hunter each had two of the nine sacks of Ryan Tannehill, totaling 71 lost yards for the Dolphins (7-7). Miami came crashing down from the euphoria of defeating New England with that double-lateral 69-yard score on the final play last week.

Titans 17, Giants 0

In East Rutherford, bruising halfback Derrick Henry had his second straight big game with a career-high 33 carries for 170 yards rushing and two touchdowns.

Henry, who had a franchise-record 238 yards and four touchdowns in a win over Jacksonville on Dec. 6, scored on 1-yard runs

in the first and third quarters.

That was all the Titans' defense needed on a wet and rainy day at MetLife Stadium as it shut down Saquon Barkley (31 yards on 14 carries) in helping Tennessee win its third straight game, matching its season high.

Ravens 20, Buccaneers 12

In Baltimore, rookie quarterback Lamar Jackson picked apart the Tampa Bay defense on a soggy field, running for 95 yards and throwing for 131.

Anointed the starter over veteran Joe Flacco earlier in the week, Jackson justified the decision with a riveting performance. Slipping between and sliding around potential tacklers, the 2016 Heisman Trophy winner operated the run-pass option in much the same fashion as during his glory days at Louisville.

Redskins 16, Jaguars 13

In Jacksonville, Josh Johnson's first NFL start in more than seven years ended with a victory, snapping the Redskins' four-game losing streak and keeping them on the fringe of the NFC playoff picture.

Johnson and Adrian Peterson drove the Redskins (7-7) into field-goal range in the closing minutes, and Dustin Hopkins made a 36-yarder on the final play to win it.

Washington had lost every game since quarterback Alex Smith sustained a season-ending leg injury.

Falcons 40, Cardinals 14

In Atlanta, Julio Jones made an acrobatic touchdown catch and Deion Jones returned an interception for an early score as the Falcons snapped a five-game losing streak.

The Falcons (5-9) forced three turnovers and sacked Arizona's Josh Rosen seven times, a single-game season high for both teams. Arizona (3-11) has dropped two straight and five of six under first-year coach Steve Wilks.

Bengals 30, Raiders 16

In Cincinnati, Joe Mixon had another big game, rushing for 129 yards and a pair of touchdowns, and the Bengals ended one of their longest losing streaks under coach Marvin Lewis.

The Bengals (6-8) had dropped five straight before

finding a team struggling as much as them. Mixon's 15-yard touchdown with 4:04 left clinched the Bengals' first win since October and capped his second straight 100-yard game.

Bills 14, Lions 13

In Orchard, Josh Allen threw a 42-yard touchdown pass to Robert Foster early in the fourth quarter to rally Buffalo and eliminate the Lions from playoff contention.

Allen also scored on a 3-yard run and finished 13 of 26 for 204 yards and no turnovers. Foster had four catches for 108 yards to top 100 for the

third time in five games since being promoted from the practice squad.

49ers 26, Seahawks 23, OT

In Santa Clara, Robbie Gould kicked a 36-yard field goal with 3:06 left in overtime and the San Francisco 49ers snapped a 10-game losing streak against the Seattle Seahawks with a 26-23 victory on Sunday.

Nick Mullens threw for 275 yards and a touchdown to help the 49ers (4-10) win consecutive games for the first time this season.

Brees connects with those who helped set NFL passing record

METAIRIE, La. (AP)—When Drew Brees became the NFL's career leader in yards passing, he wanted to come up with some sort of gift to thank those who coached him, caught the 6,357 completions it took to set the record, and those who blocked while he threw.

His solution was an exhaustive process than involved the production of about 175 unique commemorative footballs and the enlisting Saints front office and public relations staff to help track down 99 receivers, 56 offensive linemen, 11 head or assistant coaches from his 18 pro seasons, as well as a few others Brees saw as instrumental in his success.

The recipients began receiving their custom-made footballs this week, which pleased Brees because he wanted it done before Christmas.

"Naturally you start thinking, 'OK, well, a lot of people have caught those balls,'" Brees said. "So let's get a list of all the pass catchers and the number of catches and the number of yards and let's put together a game ball for them and put those statistics on there for them, so they know that they have a piece

of this and they were an important part of it."

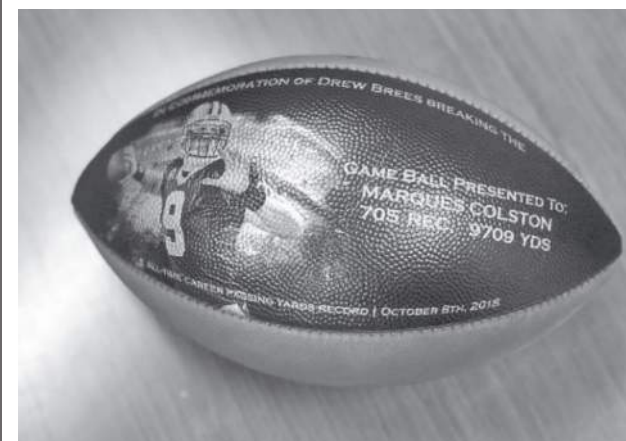
That's how the effort started. But Brees soon realized he couldn't just limit it to receivers.

"It's not just about the receivers. It's about the guys blocking." So it's like, "All right, let's find every offensive lineman that's ever started a game." So we did that," Brees said. "Then I started thinking about coaches. Then I started thinking about other people as well. So it was actually a long list. But I just wanted to do that for them."

Even current Saints players, such as veteran tight end Ben Watson, received the balls at their homes—not the mail room or locker room at Saints headquarters.

"It's him. It's surprising but it's not surprising at the same time that he would give a special thanks to the guys that helped him along the way," Watson said. "Obviously, this is his accomplishment. But him being the leader that he is, he loves to defer praise to other people."

Watson said he was "Just thankful to be able to play with him and be able to contribute to the greatness that he's achieved."



This undated photo provided by the New Orleans Saints shows a custom made football that will be given to those who helped Drew Brees become the NFL's all-time leader in yards passing.

Wall's double-double lifts Wizards over Lakers



WASHINGTON (AP)—Amid all of his team's losses and infighting and roster flux, John Wall showed just how well he's capable of playing, producing 40 points and 14 assists to lead the Washington Wizards past a sluggish LeBron James and the Los Angeles Lakers, 128-110 Sunday night.

A day after he and Lonzo Ball each registered a triple-double in a win at Charlotte, James was limited to a season-low 13 points, along with six rebounds and three assists, while making just five of 16 shots. The four-time NBA MVP sat out the fourth quarter.

The Wizards emphatically ended a four-game losing streak, going up by as many as 18 in the first quarter and 27 in the third.

They took full advantage of an opponent playing on a second consecutive night, although James and the Lakers had been 5-1 in the second half of back-to-back sets this season.

The Lakers opened Sunday's game by going 5 for 19, 0 for 8 on 3s. Washington, meanwhile, made its first five shots and 13 of its first 18, taking a 26-8 lead on Wall's layup.

Wall's play was often spectacular, including one no-look, through-the-legs pass to Sam Dekker for an easy bucket.

The All-Star point guard ended the first half with a step-back baseline rainbow jumper over 7-foot-1 center Tyson Chandler to make it 71-51. Wall turned and slapped palms with a couple of front-row folks, then spread his arms wide and basked in the ovation.

By then, Wall already had 28 points, outscoring LA's five starters—James, Ball, Chandler, Kyle Kuzma and Josh Hart—by six.

Recently acquired reserve forward Dekker scored a season-high 20 for Washington, including a buzzer-beating bank shot at the end of the third quarter that put the hosts ahead 99-76.

Washington's Bradley Beal added 25 points and 12 rebounds.

Kentavious Caldwell-Pope scored a season-high 25 points for the Lakers, 15 in the second quarter.

Washington was without starting center Dwight Howard, who had back surgery, and injured starting forward Otto Porter Jr., while a pair of players—Kelly Oubre Jr. and Austin Rivers—were unavailable because they are on their way out of town via a trade that is still not officially complete.

"We're playing against



Washington Wizards guard John Wall (2) dribbles the ball past Los Angeles Lakers guard Kentavious Caldwell-Pope (1) during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, Dec. 16, 2018, in Washington. Washington won, 128-110.

lanta Hawks.

Joe Harris had 16 points and Spencer Dinwiddie added 15 off the bench for the Nets, who last won five straight March 25-April 2, 2015.

Nuggets 95, Raptors 86

In Denver, in the fourth quarter, Jamal Murray's shot finally started falling.

"About time," the Denver guard said.

About time, too, to take the Nuggets as a serious, pesky threat.

Nikola Jokic scored 26 points, Murray had 15 of his 19 in the fourth quarter and the banged-up Nuggets rallied past the equally banged-up Toronto Raptors in a contest between conference leaders.

Kings 120, Mavericks 113

In Dallas, the Sacramento Kings ended the Dallas Mavericks' home winning streak and spoiled Dirk Nowitzki's return to the American Airlines Center.

More importantly for them, they found a way to close the deal after a stinging home loss.

Buddy Hield and De'Aaron Fox each scored 28 points Sunday night in the Kings' victory, which ended the Mavs' 11-game home winning streak.

Coming off a loss to Golden State in which they blew a 10-point lead over the final three minutes, the Kings led for the entire second half and finished off Dallas behind some big plays late by Fox.

Heat 102, Pelicans 96

In New Orleans, Dwyane Wade fondly remembers his dominant first game in New Orleans as an emerging college star with Marquette. He won't forget what was likely his final performance as a pro in the Big Easy, either.

Wade walked off the court to chants of "D-Wade! D-Wade!" from fans converging on the tunnel to the visitors' locker room after his 19 points—highlighted by tough shots over Anthony Davis at the end of each half—helped the Miami Heat beat the Pelicans.

Wade, who turns 37 in January and plans to retire after this season, said the efforts of fans around the country to see him play one last time is "definitely not lost on me."

Column: Lakers saving young core to chase Davis

LOS ANGELES—Anthony Davis is the target at the top of the Lakers' wish list.

He's also at the top of the wish list for the Boston Celtics and about 27 other teams, too. But if Davis is put on the trade block—something that is not likely until this summer, New Orleans is working to keep him—the Lakers and Celtics will be at the front of the line.

Which is why, when reports that the Lakers would not include any of their young core in a trade for Trevor Ariza came out, it fit with the Lakers' long-term thinking.

"Here's the line [the Lak-

ers] have to walk: they're not going to give away picks and their top young players in some deal that makes them incrementally better this season because they have to save all those assets for Anthony Davis, a big trade this summer either pre or post free agency," according to Adrian Wojnarowski of ESPN.

"The absolute dream scenario, people talk about (how) they can trade for Anthony Davis or sign a free agent. The dream scenario is they do both."

The dream is to sign Kawhi Leonard or Kevin Durant and

get Davis, and while that dream may be a long shot the only chance they have is if they still have their core players to throw in a package.

The larger point also is valid—the Lakers are not going to beat the Warriors come the playoffs this season (assuming the Warriors are healthy) and L.A. should keep its powder dry for bigger battles. And Davis will be the biggest of battles.

New Orleans wants to keep Davis, they are actively trying to be buyers at the trade deadline, not sellers. Sources have told me the Pelicans' plan is to

win as much as possible this season and show Davis they are serious, then come July 1 offer Davis a designated veteran contract extension worth \$230 million (or a little more, depending upon the cap). It's roughly \$40 million more than any other team can offer guaranteed. If Davis and his agent Rich Paul—the same agent as LeBron James —turn down that contract then the Pelicans will be forced to consider a trade.

If we get to that point, then all bets are off and the Lakers are all in. Until then, the Lakers are wise just to be patient.

one of the greatest players to ever play the game," Wizards coach Scott Brooks said before tipoff, "and we definitely are undermanned."

Didn't matter on this night.

Meanwhile, JaVale McGee missed the game with flu-like symptoms. A pair of sneakers James wore during a game at the Wizards a year ago Monday— one black, one white, with the word "equality" in capital gold letters on the back of each—was recently placed on display at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture. Ball finished with 10 points, five rebounds and four assists.

76ers 128, Cavaliers 105

In Cleveland, Jimmy Butler's return brought out the best in

his Philadelphia teammates.

Ben Simmons had 22 points, 11 rebounds and 14 assists for his third triple-double of the season, Joel Embiid scored 24 points and the 76ers routed the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Butler scored 19 points after missing two games—both losses—with a strained groin.

"He's such a large personality and his talent is sort of a spirit he brings to our group," coach Brett Brown said.

Butler was 6 of 10 from the field and hit three 3-pointers. He gave Simmons most of the credit.

"Ben is doing what he always does for us, passing the ball," Butler said. "When he's playing like that, the game is really easy for everybody."

Simmons had his 15th career triple-double.

"Having Jimmy back

helped because we had multiple guys that could put it away," he said.

Pacers 110, Knicks 99

In Indianapolis, Victor Oladipo scored 26 points, Myles Turner had 24 and the Indiana Pacers beat the New York Knicks for their seventh straight victory.

Oladipo added eight rebounds and seven assists, while Turner finished with six rebounds and two blocks. He also halted the Knicks' momentum on a fast break in the fourth quarter, sprinting across the court to disrupt Emmanuel Mudiay's layup attempt that would have cut the Pacers' lead to four points late in the game.

Enes Kanter finished with 20 points and 15 rebounds for the Knicks. Tim Hardaway Jr.

scored 19 points and Mudiay finished with 18.

The Pacers led by as many as 10 in the first half, but only led 56-53 at halftime.

It was tied at 81 with about 9 minutes remaining before Indiana scored seven straight points for an 88-81 lead. New York made a late run but the Pacers held on to improve to 20-10.

Nets 144, Hawks 127

In New York, Brooklyn coach Kenny Atkinson watched the Nets let a 21-point lead slip to two and was reminded of the offensive flaws that sent the team spiraling on an eight-game skid a few weeks ago.

Needing a spark on the offensive end, Atkinson made sure D'Angelo Russell led the way.

Russell scored 32 points, Rondae Hollis-Jefferson had 18 and the Nets beat the At-

Prized free agent Machado to visit Philly



The Manny Machado Free Agent Tour is coming to Philadelphia.

Machado will be in town Thursday for a recruiting visit with Phillies officials, according to a person with knowledge of the situation.

The trip to Philadelphia is part of a busy week for the star infielder. Chicago-based baseball reporter Bruce Levine has reported that Machado will be in that city to visit with White Sox officials this week and George King of the New York Post reports that Machado will visit the Yankees in New York on Wednesday.

The Phillies have strong interest in signing Machado to be their third baseman. However, landing Machado will not be easy as the player has had a long desire to play for the Yankees. The Yankees could even offer Machado a chance to play shortstop, at least for part of the 2019 season, as Didi Gregorius recovers from elbow surgery. Machado is an elite defensive third baseman, but shortstop is his favorite position.

Though the Phillies favor Machado over Bryce Harper, this winter's other mega free agent, they remain interested and engaged with Harper and pursuit of the outfielder could intensify if they don't land Machado.

Earlier this offseason, the Phillies hosted pitcher Patrick Corbin for a recruiting visit at Citizens Bank Park.

White Sox to make sales pitch, too

Meanwhile, it was reported



that Machado will also visit the White Sox.

The White Sox already have a shortstop in Tim Anderson, one of the few players on the current major league roster who figures to be a long-term piece for the rebuilding South Siders. Anderson's improvement, particularly on defense, was one of the team's biggest positive takeaways from the 2018 season.

Does Anderson's occupancy of the shortstop position prevent the White Sox from signing Machado? Of course not. Machado is a great player, and he's the kind of guy you make room for. But it's a discussion surrounding the White

Sox that doesn't necessarily surround other teams, including the Yankees.

The White Sox have greater financial flexibility than the Yankees, greater financial flexibility than pretty much every team out there with almost no long-term financial commitments to speak of. That allows them to offer the kind of gargantuan contract expected to be necessary to land Machado (and Harper, for that matter), though a recent report indicated the White Sox might not be willing to offer a record-breaking type deal. Certainly, though, the aggressive nature of their pursuits of Harper and Machado this winter makes

the White Sox look willing to spend and spend big.

When it comes to Machado's now-infamous "Johnny Hustle" comments, in which the superstar professed his distaste for hustling in an interview with The Athletic's Ken Rosenthal, Yankees managing general partner Hal Steinbrenner told reporters last month at the GM meetings "that ain't going to sell where we play baseball."

It's been an interesting hypothetical to guess how Machado's comments would play with White Sox manager Rick Renteria, who made a habit of benching players for not hustling throughout the

2018 season. Last week during the winter meetings, Renteria answered questions about the topic—without reporters bringing up Machado's name, of course—and said he won't be changing his ways just because a big-money player might play differently than he'd like to see.

"There are going to be situations in which I might have to have conversations with guys that are coming from the outside," Renteria said. "But I will venture to say this, I've said it enough publicly, they know how we want to play the game here. I think anybody who is thinking or contemplating becoming a White Sox, that we go

AP
Shortstop Manny Machado of the Los Angeles Dodgers fields a ball hit by Cameron Maybin of the Seattle Mariners during the second inning of a game at Safeco Field on August 17, 2018, in Seattle, Washington.

about it a certain way.

"It's a little more difficult at the major league level to change an attitude of an individual if they've been doing that their whole life, if they're not giving you the effort all the time, absolutely. But it requires conversation. That person is that person. My job is to get the most out of that individual to the best of my ability. Will I be able to do that 100 percent? Probably not. But I'm going to give it a shot. But I've got to be creative and find ways to communicate with the players."

The biggest difference between the two teams is their current major league fortunes. The Yankees won 100 games last season, and the White Sox lost 100 games last season. The Yankees have a star-studded roster featuring young players like Giancarlo Stanton, Aaron Judge, Gary Sanchez, Miguel Andujar and Gleyber Torres, and they can pitch Machado on joining that group and starting a new Bronx dynasty beginning in 2019.

The White Sox have their own batch of young talent to pitch, and they think the lure of playing alongside Eloy Jimenez, Michael Kopech, Dylan Cease, Luis Robert, Yoan Moncada and others is as attractive as anything any other team can offer.

Wilson Ramos, Mets agree to \$19M, 2-year deal

NEW YORK (AP)—The New York Mets have agreed to a \$19 million, two-year contract with free agent catcher Wilson Ramos, according to a person familiar with the negotiations.

The agreement signals an end to the Mets' pursuit of Marlins catcher J.T. Realmuto. Instead, New York turned to a two-time All-Star coming off a strong year with the Tampa Bay Rays and Philadelphia Phillies. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Sunday because the deal has not been announced and is pending a physical.

He would get \$8.25 million next year and \$9.25 in 2020, and the Mets would have a \$10 million option with a \$1.5 million buyout.

The 31-year-old Ramos batted .306 with 15 home runs and an .845 OPS last season, ranking fifth among catchers in Wins Above Replacement

at 2.4, via Fangraphs.

New York officials met last week with Ramos at the winter meetings in Las Vegas and with Yasmani Grandal, another free agent catcher, in Arizona. Ramos became the priority for the Mets, partly because of compensation required for signing Grandal, who turned down a \$17.9 million qualifying offer from the Los Angeles Dodgers. If New York had signed Grandal, the Mets would have forfeited their second-highest pick in next June's amateur draft and \$500,000 of international signing bonus allocation in 2019-20.

The Mets also discussed a possible trade for Realmuto but decided the players it would have had to give up in a swap were too high a cost.

Ramos crosses another item of the to-do list of new general manager Brodie Van Wagenen. The former agent acquired All-Star second

baseman Robinson Cano and closer Edwin Diaz from Seattle and also brought back former New York closer Jeurys Familia on a \$30 million, three-year deal. The team may still pursue an upgrade in center field and a left-handed reliever.

Ramos is expected to be New York's primary catcher, with Travis d'Arnaud and Kevin Plawecki as possible backups. D'Arnaud, who turns 30 in February, has been on the disabled list in five straight seasons as injuries limited him to 366 major league games, an average of 73 per season.

D'Arnaud was 3 for 15 (.200) with one homer and three RBIs in four games this year when he felt tightness in his right elbow during pregame drills in Miami. He was sent to New York and had an MRI that revealed a torn ulnar collateral ligament. Mets medical director Dr. David Altchek performed Tommy

John surgery on April 17.

Ramos made the AL All-Star team in this year but missed the game with a hamstring issue, and injuries have been a problem for him the past few years. Most notably, he tore his right ACL at the end of a breakout 2016 season with the Washington Nationals, likely costing himself millions of dollars as a free agent that offseason. He ended up with Tampa Bay with a \$12.5 million, two-year deal and earned an additional \$2 million this year as an escalator for making 55 starts at catcher in 2017.

He was also on the disabled list twice in 2015—with a broken little finger in his right hand and a strained left elbow—in 2016 with a strained right rotator cuff and in 2017 with a bruised right wrist.

Ramos' agreement was first reported by The Athletic and details of the terms by The New York Times.

Nadal to join Federer in 2019 Laver Cup

SWITZERLAND—Spaniard Rafael Nadal will team up with perennial rival Roger Federer for the third edition of the Laver Cup in Geneva next year.

The team event featuring the best of Europe against a World team will be taking place for the third time, with Nadal and Federer also teammates in the inaugural match in 2017.

Team Europe non-playing captain Bjorn Borg said having Nadal and Federer was a boost for the September competition.

"It doesn't get much better for a captain than naming both Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal for the Laver Cup in Geneva," former world number one Borg said in a statement.

"Bringing together two of the greatest players, and rivals, the sport has ever seen together on one team is very exciting for our sport—and will give us the best possible chance to win

the Laver Cup three years in a row."

Federer and Nadal, first and second in the all-time list of men's Grand Slam winners with 20 and 16 respectively, won a doubles match together at the Laver Cup in Prague in 2017.

"I think we all underestimated how powerful it would be to see them sitting side by side, coaching each other and cheering each other on," Borg said.

Swiss Federer, one of the instigators of the event, said having Nadal in the team again after he missed this year's edition in Chicago due to injury was an exciting prospect.

"We had a lot of fun in Prague and it will be very special for me to team up with him again in Switzerland to try and defend our title," Federer said.

Next year's match will take place on a black court inside Geneva's 17,000-seat Palexpo venue.

LAYER CUP

Messi scores hat trick to hit 50-goal mark in 2018

BARCELONA, Spain (AP)—Lionel Messi hit the 50-goal mark for club and country in 2018 after scoring his 43rd career hat trick for Barcelona on Sunday.

Messi's brilliance powered Barcelona to a 5-0 victory at Levante and kept the defending champions three points ahead of Sevilla and Atletico Madrid in the Spanish league.

It also avenged Barcelona's only loss in the league last season when Levante stunned the visitors 5-4 in the penultimate round in a match that Messi missed.

"We had circled this match on the calendar after what happened here last season," said Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde. "We had trouble at the beginning, as we expected, but once we got in front we were able to little by little play our game."

Messi netted his 18th, 19th and 20th goals in all competitions this season after setting up Luis Suarez to get Barcelona rolling against the flow of play at the Ciutat de Valencia Stadium.

Already trailing 4-0, Levante lost Erick Cabaco in the 76th minute with a direct red card for cutting down Ousmane Dembele.

Messi then set up Gerard Pique to complete the demolition.

It was Messi's second treble of the season, adding to his three goals against PSV Eindhoven in the Champions League in September. He has a total of 31 hat tricks in the Spanish league, and this is the eighth time in nine years he has scored at least 50 goals in a calendar year. Messi has 46 goals



AP
FC Barcelona's forward Lionel Messi, right, is in action against Levante's defender Jose Gomez Campana during their La Liga soccer match at Ciutat de Valencia stadium in Valencia, Spain, Sunday, Dec. 16, 2018.

for Barcelona and four goals for Argentina in 2018.

The Argentina forward leads the Spanish league with 14 goals through 16 rounds. He scored two goals—both from free kicks—in last round's 4-0 win at Espanyol.

Levante had a promising start, pressuring Barcelona up the pitch and creating scoring chances that included Emmanuel Boateng's shot that hit the crossbar in the 33rd.

But Messi put Barcelona in charge two minutes later when he dribbled across the box to draw in three defenders before flicking the ball back

for the unmarked Suarez to stab home.

Messi made it 2-0 just before halftime when Sergio Busquets played him clear on a solo break after intercepting a pass in midfield. Messi

got his second goal in the 47th when Suarez recovered the ball and passed wide to Jordi Alba. Suarez then used a dummy run to let Alba's pass run through for Messi to drive in a left-footed shot.

Suarez also cued Messi's third goal in the 60th when he dribbled through the legs of Cabaco before crossing for Arturo Vidal, who then found Messi all alone to tap the ball in.

Meanwhile, second-placed

Sevilla beat Girona 2-0 to extend its winning streak to 10 straight home matches across all competitions, including six straight in the league.

"It's fantastic. Beyond the numbers, which are excellent, I can sense that my team always wants more and has connected with our fans," Sevilla coach Pablo Machin said. "This connection gives us a bonus and makes us super competitive."

In a match that pitted Machin against the team he coached last season, Ever Banega and Pablo Sarabia broke down Girona's defense with a pair of second-half goals.

In other results, Real Betis came out behind for a 3-1 win at Espanyol to go fifth — four points behind fourth-placed Real Madrid.

Last-placed Huesca got a stoppage-time goal from Samuele Longo to salvage a 2-2 draw with 10-man Villarreal.

Pulisic reportedly agrees to Premier League transfer

GERMANY—U.S. men's national team fans, grab a paper bag and quit hyperventilating.

It appears that Christian Pulisic's long rumored move to the Premier League is moving closer to becoming a reality.

Pulisic, 20, is out of contract at Dortmund in the summer of 2020, meaning he has just over 18 months left on his current deal with the Bundesliga giants.

In recent months he has lost his starting place at Dortmund to English teenage sensation Jadon Sancho, and whenever Pulisic has been asked about a move to England he hasn't shut it down. At all.

Initially a report from Cadena Ser in Spain said that Atletico Madrid enquired about

Pulisic's availability but Dortmund told them they have already agreed to sell him to a Premier League club.

And a separate report from the Daily Mail has followed up by saying Chelsea is confident of agreeing a \$80 million deal for Pulisic in January, which would see him remain at Dortmund for the rest of the season then join the Blues in the summer. Per the report in the Mail, Pulisic has told Dortmund he wants to join Chelsea. Another report from Spain claims that Pulisic has agreed to join Liverpool, as Jurgen Klopp brought him to Dortmund.

Interesting. Very interesting. Previous reports claimed

that Chelsea, Liverpool, Tottenham Hotspur and Manchester United all wanted to sign the USMNT superstar and one report even stated that Chelsea wanted to sign Pulisic in January.

Dortmund's sporting director Michael Zorc has said Pulisic will not be sold in January, but Pulisic told Pro Soccer Talk recently that he would sit down with Dortmund during the upcoming winter break and discuss his future at the club.

Pulisic joined Dortmund as a 16-year-old and although the Hersey, Pennsylvania is well liked at the Westfalenstadion he is clearly no longer a guaranteed starter.

For Dortmund, if they allow Pulisic to run his contract down to just a year left on it this summer they will not be able to request anywhere near the \$80 million he is currently valued at.

With the January transfer window opening on Jan. 1, expect Pulisic to be linked with plenty of PL clubs over the next few weeks. Chelsea could be a perfect landing spot for Pulisic as Maurizio Sarri values players who can get on the ball, pick out passes and dictate the tempo of the game.

The likes of Willian and Pedro may be the odd ones out at Stamford Bridge if Pulisic arrives, while the future of Eden Hazard may also be in doubt if Chelsea line up this deal for the U.S. superstar.

YUTU

From Page 28

sales, games and more. Activities will include food and drink sales, free mochi-tasting, free bouncy house for children, one free round of yoyo play, and one free Saipan-da pencil while supplies last.

T-shirts will be given away for each donation of \$15 or more, while supplies last.

KANOA

From Page 28

ing Wings FC, Islanders, and Southern Cobras.

"We aim to win all our games. We hope that these off-island games will help our boys improve their individual and team skills. We would also like them to have fun, especially after what they have gone through during and after Super Typhoon Yutu hit Saipan. Most of our players lived in the southern part of Saipan which was badly affected by the storm," Villafior said.

Partnering with the MVA to put on the event are PDM Promoters, Japanese Society of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Japanese Northern Marianas Descent Association.

For more information, visit The Marianas Calendar at www.mymarianas.com or contact the MVA community projects divisions at communityprojects@mymarianas.com or 1.670.664.3210. (PR)

The team manager added that even before Yutu, Kanoa had already planned to send its boys U15 squad to Guam, as the club brought its girls U15 and boys U12 squads in a similar event in Saipan's southern neighbor last year. Kanoa's U15 boys crew will have a tough task of duplicating the feat of the girls U15 and boys U12 teams that were undefeated in the 2017 GFA Fall Gobblefest Weekend. Jim Maniago, Antonio, Anastacio, Bata, Markus, Pablo, and Gil were part of the Kanoa U12 that won three games and drew two in last year's friendlies.

ATHLETES

From Page 28

that will run from July 7 to 20, 2109 and hotels may not be able to accommodate all of them. To date, 34 hotels have committed 1,300 beds for the Pacific Games.

Samoa organizers believed that having an Athletes Village is also cost-effective for delegates.

"We recognize that our goal to host all athletes and officials in hotels was an ambitious one. But we continue to look for ways to be cost effective

and meet our timeframes. We are tracking the schedule. The government stands firm in our aim to partner together with the private sector. Procurement for the Games has been busy over the past few months and will continue into the new year," Minister of Education, Sports and Culture Loau Keneti Sio said in a statement posted in the Games' official website.

"The Games Organizing Committee acknowledges the support of the Methodist Church of Samoa Board in making special allowances to help accommodate for athletes

and team officials. When the request was sent, the board did not hesitate to answer the call and we are thankful for the spirit they have come in. Hosting athletes and team officials within the Faleula compound not only helps alleviate our transport and security services, it will make these Games extra special. The Pacific Games is not only about sports, but also about building bonds between our Pacific nations. Being based within a Samoan village environment will provide insight and appreciation into our Samoan way of doing things.

We're really excited about the partnership," he added.

The CNMI will be participating in next year's Games, but the number of delegates has not been confirmed, as Northern Marianas Sports Association were not able to discuss matters related to the competition in the last two months (November and December meetings were canceled due to Super Typhoon Yutu). Initially, baseball, canoe, athletics, tennis, sailing, swimming, rugby 7's, and 3x3 basketball have expressed their interest to send athletes in Samoa.



Steelers stand
up to Brady,
Patriots

PAGE 24

Saipan Tribune Sports



KAN
PACIFIC
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CLOSED

28 TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2018

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Kanoa FC to compete in Guam

Yutu 5K Holiday Fun Run on Dec. 29



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Runners will race along Beach Road later this month, as the Marianas Visitors Authority holds the Yutu 5K Holiday Fun Run on Dec. 29.

As part of the #MarianasSTRONG Yearend Celebration at the Paseo de Marianas, the Marianas Visitors Authority will hold the Yutu 5K Holiday Fun Run on Dec. 29.



The race will be held at 5pm from the pedestrian mall flagpole south along Beach Road to the former Wendy's restaurant and back. The first 100 registrants will receive a holiday hat and the first 100 finishers will get a Yutu 5K Holiday Fun Run T-shirt. A special prize will be awarded to the best holiday costume. Registration opens at 4pm

"The #MarianasSTRONG Year End Celebration is going to be a great time for residents and visitors to celebrate the holidays, and the Yutu 5K Fun Run is going to be a great opportunity to show our holiday spirit in a fun way," said MVA community projects manager Martin Duenas.

"All the registration fees from the race will go to Karidat Social Services to assist with the continued recovery efforts following Super Typhoon Yutu. Registration is only a \$1 (minimum donation), but of course, larger donations are welcome," he added.

The #MarianasSTRONG Yearend Celebration is intended to mark the resiliency and recovery of the Marianas after

the Commonwealth was hit by Super Typhoon Yutu late October. The annual Mochitsuki Festival, featuring the Japanese traditional pounding of rice in preparation for the New Year, will highlight the event. Other festivities from 5pm to 10pm will include live entertainment, food

See YUTU on Page 27

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Markus Toves will suit up for Kanoa FC when the club plays in the Guam/NMI Friendlies in Dededo from Dec. 20 to 23.



By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Spring season champion Kanoa Football Club Boys U15 is heading to Guam this weekend to play against three teams in the 2018 Guam/NMI Friendlies.

CNMI national youth team members Merrick Toves, Brian Lubao, Jonathan Mindanao, and Daniel Mar Pablo will lead the Kanoa FC crew. Ian Lubao, Ian Karl and Jim Kurt Maniago, Joe Emil Antonio, John Mark Anastacio, Zyrus Lester Bata,



Markus Toves, Renz Guiller Fauni, Sean Gil, and Taehun Han will also suit up for the visiting squad in the series of matches that will take place from Dec. 20 to 23 at the Guam Football Association National Training Center in Dededo. Raymond Zapanta will coach the team and will be assisted by Kanoa U18 player Sebastian Manabat, while club secretary Cristy Villafior is the manager.

The core of the group going to Guam was part of the squad that handed Kanoa its first boys U15 crown in the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association's youth league last April. Kanoa was undefeated in the 2018 spring season, as it finished the double-round robin competition with an 8-2-0 win-draw-loss record. The group also played in the fall season, but after only three games, the league was suspended (due to the damage left by Super Typhoon Yutu on Saipan) and Kanoa players have yet to return to the pitch for an organized game, so the friendlies in Guam are good news to them.

At the GFA facility, Kanoa FC U15 will be challenging. See KANO on Page 27

Athletes Village at Pacific Games named

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The Games Organizing Committee of the XVI Pacific

Games in Samoa has made changes in the accommodation arrangement for delegates, designating Methodist Church in Faleula as



the Athletes Village.

According to the XVI Pacific Games press statement, the Athletes Village will house competitors

and team officials, while the more than 1,000 technical officials, other delegates, and weightlifting and boxing athletes will stay in hotels.

Initially, local organizers announced that all athletes and officials will be accommodated in hotels after the Pacific Games Office and Accommodation Providers and the Samoa Tourism Authority signed a memorandum of agreement last month. However, more than 4,000 delegates are expected to be in Samoa to attend the Games

See ATHLETES on Page 27



SAMOA PACIFIC GAMES
The Methodist Church in Faleula will serve as the Athletes Village for the XVI Pacific Games in Samoa next year.